







# EGYPT SINCE CROMER





# EGYPT SINCE CROMER

BY

LORD LLOYD

VOLUME I

"So shall it be with all the men that set their  
faces to go into Egypt to sojourn there."

JEREMIAH xlii. 17

AMS PRESS

*New York*

**Reprinted from the edition of 1933, London**  
**First AMS EDITION published 1970**  
**Manufactured in the United States of America**

**Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 75-1070704**

**SBN: complete set: 404-04024-1**

**volume 1: 404-04025-X**

**AMS PRESS, INC.**  
**NEW YORK, N. Y. 10003**

## PREFACE

It is not without misgivings that I have undertaken the work of writing this book. Lord Cromer's *Modern Egypt* is the criterion by which all subsequent histories of the British sojourn in the Nile valley must inevitably be judged. The standards, both literary and scientific, which it sets, are of the highest, and I know that my own efforts must fall far short of them. Lord Cromer had also the advantage that he was writing of a period during which he was almost uninterruptedly at the head of affairs in Egypt. The characters of his drama were personally well known to him: the forces which were at work behind the scenes were not hidden from him: and the policy which we were following in Egypt was evolved very largely out of his own mind and experience.

The only consideration that has genuinely heartened me for the task is the memory of his deep faith in the imperial destiny of his country and in her capacity to benefit mankind. It seems to me that upon those who have inherited that faith the duty is clearly laid of describing, as best they can, the superstructure that has been erected upon the foundations which he laid. For that reason, and for that reason alone, I have drawn the courage to undertake this task of writing a sequel to *Modern Egypt*.

At the outset I have been faced with the difficulty of deciding at what point to begin my story. Lord

Cromer laid down his office in 1907; but although the description of Egyptian reforms which is contained in *Modern Egypt* is complete as far as that year, this "account of the principal political events connected with purely Egyptian affairs stopped at the date of Tewfik Pasha's death, which occurred on January 7, 1892". To begin the narrative again from 1892 has seemed to me to be clearly superfluous: and, on the other hand, to carry on without preface from 1907 would leave in some directions a gap which needs filling. The compromise which has suggested itself to me is to make the year 1904 the general starting-point of this sequel. In that year, the Anglo-French Agreement was signed, and from the international point of view, Egypt entered upon a new era. Roughly at the same period a new force was making itself felt in the political consciousness of Egypt, a new leaf was slowly turning in the political thought of England, and the inner decay that was sapping the strength of the Ottoman Empire and the old spirit of Islam was producing visible results.

I feel, therefore, that I can begin my story from somewhere about this point without being unduly anxious lest it should weary by repetition: and in all those sections of it which contain any general survey of any aspect of Egyptian conditions, I have constantly borne in mind that those who desire such surveys will find them best and most authoritatively given in Cromer's comprehensive work. I have not been able to avoid writing a prefatory chapter or two, surveying certain aspects of Egyptian conditions, but I have carefully limited myself in this regard: and if it seems that this book lacks comprehensiveness as a result, I can only plead that it is intended as a sequel to *Modern Egypt*, and that as such it should be read.

In the course of compiling this book I have fortunately been able to consult many of those who took a prominent part in the incidents related. In particular I am indebted to Sir Ronald Storrs, who combines a faithful and well-stored memory with a capacity for vivid narration, from which I hope the story has profited. Mr. Philip Graves also permitted me to draw upon his unique experience of the Near East and its personalities during a period in which he himself played a prominent part. To Sir John Perceval I must express grateful thanks for valuable criticisms on legal matters, and to Sir Wasey Sterry for putting at my disposal an experience of the Sudan which is admittedly that of a master. Mr. Keown Boyd gave me much help in regard to various important questions connected with the administration of the Interior, and Mr. Hall did me the same service in questions concerning Egypt's foreign relations. I am further especially indebted to Mr. Colin Forbes-Adam for his help in the perusal of Foreign Office documents, as well as for much invaluable general assistance.

LLOYD

30 PORTMAN SQUARE  
*November 26, 1932*



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

FIFTY years have elapsed since we first occupied Egypt. So short a period would occupy a small space even in the annals of European civilisation. Set in its true perspective in the unending history of the Nile Delta, it becomes a moment so fleeting that only the longest record would find a place for it. Yet that brief moment of our sojourn in Egypt has its importance for us now, and before the historian can assess what has been achieved in it, he must surely endeavour to get clear to his own satisfaction what was being attempted. The task is not easy, for British policy is not rigid, but compromising, in essence. Its infinite capacity for alteration has shocked observers, and furnished a favourite theme for essays in detraction. And, on the other hand, the same quality has been thought to furnish a proof of our practical nature, and of our genius for dealing directly with matters in hand. In Egypt, at any rate, the matters in hand were so difficult that our policy began to change in form and colour almost from the earliest years of the Occupation, and now, in 1932, is hardly from any angle recognisable as the young hopeful who began an active career fifty years ago.

If any of those who were responsible for British policy at the time had been compelled to state in

1882 the purpose for which we had gone to Egypt, he would have replied with accuracy and conviction that our purpose was to reform the administration, to set up a Government working upon honest and humane principles, and to withdraw from the country as soon as we had made such a Government stable and progressive, and therefore free from the danger of foreign intervention which would menace our imperial communications. This was a policy definite and reasonable enough upon the face of it. We were determined upon an early retirement, but a closer examination revealed a striking weakness, for that determination was qualified. Before we retired the Government of Egypt was to be made humane, stable, and progressive. The policy was not so definite after all, but in one important particular woefully vague. The incurable optimism of our race was leaving something to chance as usual: and we were lightheartedly committing ourselves to engagements which could not in practice be carried out.

We might reorganise the administration, we might impart to it a spirit more honest and humane than Egypt had ever seen in its Government—but how could we ensure that our work would last? The Turkish governing families were waiting with hands outstretched to take back any powers we might let drop, and use them as selfishly as they had used them in the past. The Governments of Europe were as concerned as they had ever been for the welfare of their nationals in Egypt, and for their financial interests in the country. How were we to make certain that the forces of reaction would not, immediately upon our retirement, undo what we had done, bring back the old misgovernment, with international interference hard upon its heels?

To this question there was surely more than one possible answer. But in 1882 there was only one reply to be expected from any British Government. It has often been supposed that Lord Dufferin, in his original proposals for the constitution of Egypt, which included the creation of Provincial Councils and of the Legislative Council and Assembly, gave that reply himself. Liberal opinion was, at any rate, inclined to assume that his report advocated representative institutions as a certain and effective check upon the forces of reaction, and proposed to arm the people of Egypt with a voting paper as a sure weapon of defence against tyranny and oppression. In reality, nobody was more acutely aware than Lord Dufferin himself of the tentative and uncertain nature of the democratic checks he was proposing. Lord Cromer, who was in close touch with him at that time and knew his mind intimately, has left a record of what were his actual thoughts.<sup>1</sup>

"I see it occasionally stated", he wrote, "that Lord Dufferin contemplated an early development of the institutions which he created, and that the British and Egyptian Governments are guilty of what is almost tantamount to a breach of faith in not fulfilling the promises which Lord Dufferin is alleged to have made. I do not know on what evidence these statements are based. They are certainly not borne out by anything which is contained in Lord Dufferin's report. It is indeed impossible to read that report without arriving at the conclusion that the thought uppermost in Lord Dufferin's mind at the time of writing it was that any very rapid development of self-governing institutions in Egypt was to be deprecated. . . .

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, March 3, 1907, para. 6.

“The impression left on my mind from all that Lord Dufferin said and wrote was that he had no very great confidence in the results of the experiment which he initiated, and that he was gratified and perhaps somewhat astonished at the degree of success which had been achieved. In other words, Lord Dufferin’s wide experience and statesmanlike grasp of public affairs was such as to preclude his entertaining any illusions as to the rapidity with which self-governing institutions could safely be developed in Egypt. All he hoped to accomplish was ‘to erect some sort of barrier, however feeble, against the intolerable tyranny’ of the former rulers of Egypt and to create institutions which could in time be ‘fostered and educated’ into being ‘fairly useful’.”

Unfortunately, Lord Dufferin, whatever his real thoughts, felt himself compelled by circumstances to express them publicly in language not free from ambiguity. His study of the facts led him inevitably to the conclusion that democratic institutions were most unlikely ever to flourish in Egypt, and that they could only do so if they were shielded and fostered by a prolonged British Occupation.<sup>1</sup> At the same time his knowledge of the political philosophy fashionable in England at the period made him realise that a bald and untempered statement of this conclusion would be most unpopular. He therefore compromised by

<sup>1</sup> “Few institutions have succeeded that have not been the outcome of slow growth and gradual development; but in the East even the germs of constitutional freedom are non-existent. . . .

“If, therefore, we found ourselves upon what already exists, and endeavour to expand it to such proportions as may seem commensurate with the needs and aptitudes of the country, we may succeed in creating a vitalised and self-existent organism, instinct with evolutionary force. Unless they are convinced that we intend to shield and foster the system we have established, it will be in vain to expect the timid politicians of the East to identify themselves with its existence.” (General Report by Lord Dufferin respecting reorganisation in Egypt, Feb. 6, 1883.)

advocating representative institutions and somewhat disingenously he went further and cited them as proof of our disinterested intentions.<sup>1</sup>

Unfortunately, public opinion in England had not Lord Dufferin's "wide experience and statesmanlike grasp", but placed its entire faith in democratic institutions, not realising that it was easy enough to set up the skeleton of such institutions, but that nothing could give that skeleton active life except the will and understanding of the Egyptian people themselves. We were completely settled in our conviction that the magic wand of education and the subtle force of example would combine to produce a "civic sense"—that spirit of liberty without license, of reasonable independence, which is the Anglo-Saxon ideal. And when in the space of a few years a voter's heart should beat beneath every galabieh, and a voter's sturdy intelligence fill every Egyptian head, then we could withdraw our Army and our Advisers, the Capitulations would be willingly abrogated, and all would be gloriously well.

Lord Cromer was the first person who was forced by the stern compulsion of circumstances to face the actual facts. To him it soon became clear that the policies of reform and evacuation were absolutely irreconcilable. From reform we could not withdraw, and it was going to be a long and uncertain business: the policy of early evacuation was therefore tacitly dropped, to the indignation of many interested observers both in England and on the continent of Europe.

But its corollary—the legalisation of our more per-

<sup>1</sup> "The very fact of our having endowed the country with representative institutions is a proof of our disinterestedness. It is the last thing we should have done had we desired to retain its government in leading strings." (*Ibid.*)



manent position in Egypt—was not accepted. Instead, the Occupation was carried on without a basic policy of any kind. The British nation just accepted the facts. We were in Egypt, we were carrying out much-needed reforms, and we must continue in control there until these reforms were completed. The process was bound to take some time, so for the present we need not worry too much about the meaning of completion, or about what would happen thereafter.

This was a situation admirably suited to our temperament, and in it Cromer worked with amazing success for the material restoration of Egypt. But our critics were not so easily satisfied. The attacks were persistent, and in the effort to repel them was evolved a new policy with a new justification. We were in Egypt for the good of the people, and the good we had already done was sufficient justification for our still remaining.

It may be said at once that Cromer was not satisfied with this state of affairs. He was battling with financial chaos, with foreign hostility and its delicate consequences, and with the embarrassments of the Capitulations; and these were sufficient for the day. But having won his way through the worst of them he was at once ready to set to work to import some logic into the confusion. To him it seemed that there were only two possible alternatives: an autonomous Egypt, or annexation by Great Britain. Autonomy was the solution he preferred, and by this time, after twenty years' treatment by civilised processes, it should have been on all grounds the preferable solution.

There were just two difficulties. The first was in the Capitulations, which, as we shall later see, were a serious barrier to a really genuine autonomy. This

barrier, though not immovable, did introduce into the situation a seriously complicating factor: and until it was got rid of little genuine advance was possible. By reason of its presence, the problem was not, as in India, a simple problem of how far responsible Government could be substituted for British control in the best interests of the people. Before any step could be taken, its effect upon the Capitulations had first to be considered. Would it strengthen their hold, and so postpone the ultimate autonomy? This and other questions were always in the minds of all the parties.

The second difficulty lay in the fact that we had committed ourselves so early and so completely to a democratic form of Government as the only means of salvation. The time should always have been drawing nearer when we would be able to relax our control in favour of control by the people. But, in actual fact, that time was hardly a day closer. The seeds of democracy had fallen in barren soil and had not germinated. The Mudir, the Omdeh, and the Sheikhs were still the powers that counted in the provinces. In Cairo the Khedive and his satellites were still the strongest single force in politics. And when, in 1907, an experiment was made in the relaxation of British control, the true state of affairs was very soon apparent. The experiment had to be dropped, and the old illogical state of affairs continued until the War.

With the War came a great opportunity to set matters right in this regard. But, as we shall see, it was not taken: had it been it might have been possible to cultivate the plant of representative institutions with closer and more continuous care and attention. But in actual fact the crisis which supervened upon the Armistice found us without a logical

plan, without adequate intelligence, and totally unprepared. The policy which was devised hastily to meet the unexpected state of affairs was tantamount to announcing that we now preferred evacuation to any other possible course. Gone was our benevolent interest in the welfare of the masses: no longer did we consider it of the first importance in Egypt's interests that the Capitulations should be abrogated: nor did we regard it as in any way vital that the administrative standards we had set up and the economic reforms we had carried out should be preserved.

From that time onward something seems to have deprived us of the patience and the calculating endurance which animated us in the great days of our history. In all our more recent relations with the East we seem eager only for immediate results: all our sowing must bear fruit "in our time". And to this impatience is joined a shrinking from criticism, and an almost obsequious desire for popularity. With this brief picture of our present attitude in our minds, it is interesting to turn back again to the earlier years, and to pick up the threads of the story where they were dropped at the close of *Modern Egypt*.

Twenty years before, Cromer had found Egypt virtually bankrupt, her natural prosperity throttled almost to death by debt and maladministration. And, as if the task of restoration were not in itself formidable enough, he had to struggle at the same time with France's persistent hostility to his activities as agent of the Occupying Power: with the burden of a complicated machinery of financial administration: and with the strange problem of restraining the lawlessness of an Eastern population by means of Western juridical codes and institutions.

The first of these additional obstacles had been

removed in 1904, or so it appeared to Cromer himself, by the Anglo-French Agreement: the second, the nature and intricacy of which has been fully described by Lord Milner in *England in Egypt*, had been first of all surmounted by the patience and genius of Sir Edgar Vincent, Milner, Cromer himself, and then swept away by the Agreement. The third problem remained to be dealt with, and to Cromer it seemed that 1904 had at last made a solution possible. And in spite of them all, and of the difficulties inherent in the very nature of his task, a measure of progress had been achieved which in 1882 would have seemed incredible.

Milner's *England in Egypt* and Cromer's own book have already told the full story, and here it will only be necessary to give the most salient figures which illustrate the extent of that progress.

In 1883 the annual revenue of Egypt was £8,935,000; in 1903 it had reached £13,074,000. Concurrently with this large increase in revenue large reductions in taxation had been carried out: and a comprehensive programme of fiscal reform had been completed by the latter date, by means of which taxation had been placed upon a sound and equitable footing at about sixteen shillings per head of the population. This conversion to financial orthodoxy, difficult though it had been, had not entailed unhealthy repressions. For during the same period large sums had been spent out of revenue upon works of a reproductive nature. The Assouan Dam had been completed in 1902: new canals had been cut: extensive drainage works undertaken: agricultural roads had been constructed.

The financial situation and the prosperity of the countryside had thus been successfully restored, and

the foundation laid for a steady and rapid expansion in the future: an expansion which soon followed and outran all anticipations.

The story is not by any means so happy when it relates to the maintenance of "law and order" and the administration of justice. For this state of affairs there is no doubt that our general policy had been in a large measure to blame; and it is therefore worth while to examine the reasons for it with some attention. The original purpose of our policy had been, as we have seen, to evacuate after setting up a stable and progressive Government: and it had seemed clearly beyond this purpose to intervene to any large extent in any departments except those of Finance and Irrigation. The British Government was determined not to take over the Government of Egypt, but to leave as much as possible to Egyptian control. But the British Representatives in Egypt soon discovered a state of affairs upon which they could not for very shame turn their backs. They had to undertake the work of reform in departments such as the Interior and Justice; but owing to the policy laid down in London and imposed upon them, they had to undertake it with one hand tied behind their backs, and in the face of a very natural resentment and opposition on the part of the Egyptian Ministers. In view of this attitude the Government of Great Britain, still mindful of their promises, were not at first prepared to support attempts at reform, and these attempts had to be abandoned for several years. When they were seriously renewed, they achieved some success, but were never very vigorously pressed—still because of our policy—and the result was the unsatisfactory state of affairs existing at the end of Cromer's régime. He himself was apparently prepared to put up with the situa-

tion, and base his hopes upon the future. And there was certainly some reason to dislike the idea of appointing in the Ministry of the Interior the large additional number of English officials without whom it was unlikely that any rapid transformation would be possible.

It is also true that in regard to the system of Justice obtaining—the system centring upon the Native Tribunals—international considerations made it very difficult to undertake any drastic reform, such as might have been contemplated had we annexed Egypt and taken over its Government. Yet such reform would undoubtedly have been of inestimable benefit, for the system as he found it was a Western system, based very largely upon the principles and practice of French jurisprudence, and by no means suited to a backward and uneducated population. It is the especial feature of Western systems that they depend to a large extent upon the active co-operation of the people among whom they are administered. To take the most obvious instance, the Court depends for its knowledge of facts upon the testimony of independent witnesses: even the responsibility of pronouncing upon guilt is often undertaken or shared by members of the public.

Western minds are apt to regard their principles as self-evident truths, which must be universally accepted. And they are often astonished to find that this is not the case. Certainly the principles upon which justice is administered in the East are widely different. It is related that when the French system was about to be introduced into North Africa, a resident notable was given a brief sketch of its salient points. Having listened to it, he remarked in tones of utter despair that in future there would be no

justice. "Why?" asked his interlocutor. "Because witnesses will be required", was the answer.

The undoubted fact is that under the Turkish dispensation, as in many other Eastern Empires, justice, like cholera, was a visitation of a mysterious and very unpleasant kind. The most that could be hoped for was a providential immunity from its incidence. No sane man would expect, much less accept, an invitation to assist in making it endemic.

Yet the Turkish system, repugnant as it may appear to our way of thought, was not without its merits. It had an extremely efficacious restraining influence under a strong Government, because nothing was more certain than that when a crime took place somebody was going to be punished—very probably somebody of influence and authority. However immoral, it was obviously better for the national health than a system which is uncongenial and incomprehensible to the general public, and yet depends to a large extent upon their support. Cromer himself probably realised this to the full, and it may well have been not of Sinai alone that he was thinking when, in his annual report for 1907, he wrote the paragraph on the Sinai province which contained the following sentences:

"I stated last year that a judge who is termed El Mubashaa decides by the light of the dreams which may come to him in his sleep. It will perhaps not involve the too rapid introduction of civilised processes if this functionary is requested for the future to decide by the light of any information which may come to him when he is awake."<sup>1</sup>

For these reasons it was undoubted—and the Authorities were prepared to admit—that the ad-

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report on Affairs in Egypt*, dated March 3, 1907, para. 2.

ministration of justice and order had not progressed as it should. The amount of serious crime was astonishingly high, and showed no improvement from year to year. Justice did not appear in the light of these figures to be very swift or very sure, and room was clearly discernible for improvement in the efficiency of the police.<sup>1</sup>

The course that was perforce adopted in practice was a patient resignation until the slow forces of natural development should endow the Egyptian people with an understanding of, and a reasonable desire for, justice as we know it. This course was to be supplemented, it was optimistically hoped, by an educational policy which would raise the general moral and social standards of the population. If the system could not be altered to suit the nature of the people, the nature of the people must be altered to suit the system. In the happy days ten years before the War, the belief was still entertained that human nature was susceptible to rapid alteration by extensive educational programmes.

Those who held this belief were further encouraged by noting that the indigenous system of Egyptian education had never in any degree attempted so difficult a task. The annual report for 1904 contains the following remarks upon the kuttabs or native

<sup>1</sup> Sir Eldon Gorst, writing in July 1904 (*England in Egypt*, App. III. p. 413), remarked: "It cannot, however, be said that the departments of Justice or the Interior have as yet settled down into a normal steady rate of progress, and doubts are still expressed as to whether their organisation is being built on sure foundations". He did not, however, attribute the blame in any way to policy, but laid it all upon the judicial system, which he condemned as—"full of unnecessary complications and formalities and altogether unsuited to the needs of an Oriental population". It probably merited even this sweeping denunciation, for it had certainly not been carefully devised for the people to whom it had been applied. At the same time it is unfortunately true that twenty years after the commencement of our occupation the system remained unchanged, and that twenty years later still, although our occupation had ceased to be effective, the system continued essentially the same.



village schools. "The children flock to the kuttabs not to receive instruction which will fit them for their position in life, but to commit to memory the whole of the Koran, and thereby as reputed fikis to escape from liability to military conscription. And in Egypt a Fiki is virtually a beggar."<sup>1</sup>

Apart from this deadening state of affairs, there was also in existence the hardly less pernicious result of the efforts of native Egyptian reformers. In their impatient desire for a more advanced type of education, the latter had seized hastily upon the French system of instruction and introduced it as it stood into their own country, without the least attempt first to study the genuine needs of Egypt, and then to modify the new system so as to conform to those needs. Rushing then to the other extreme, they had insisted upon the new schools being staffed by Egyptian teachers, untrained in the new methods; and upon the new instruction being imparted in Arabic—a language entirely inadequate to deal with modern subjects.

As a counterweight to this the British authorities advocated an unambitious policy, which aimed at providing inexpensive, efficient, elementary schools, in which religious instruction would be furnished "together with a course of secular instruction designed merely to equip the pupil with sufficient knowledge to take care of his own interests in his own station of life".<sup>2</sup> How far this programme was successfully carried out will become clear in due course. It certainly did not succeed in altering very largely the indigenous attitude towards education: this branch of activity never came to be regarded as something good in itself, but remained in the popu-

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, 1905: Education.

<sup>2</sup> *Annual Report*, 1904.

lar view merely a means to an end. The only visible change—and it is at least doubtful whether it represented a moral improvement—was that the ambition to become a clerk in a Government office ousted aspirations towards fikiship: and it is an ambition which in the East has wrecked many excellent schemes of educational development.

It may be said then that in 1904 the British Occupation had attained almost unqualified success in restoring the finances of Egypt, and in the engineering achievements which were essential to the prosperity of the country. In both these departments of State activity British officials had taken over the actual control, and in both they had wrestled victoriously with the material difficulties which confronted them. It was not essential in these fields that the people should actively co-operate. If they did nothing more than refrain from obstruction, a very full measure of success was still possible. It was otherwise in departments more nearly concerned with the social and moral life of the people. Here there were problems much more complex to be solved. Was the Occupying Power to assume a full control of these departments also, and force upon the people by executive action new standards of behaviour and new habits of life? This would have been entirely incompatible with the policy of early evacuation and of holding as far as possible a merely advisory position, which the British Government had decided upon and proclaimed to the world. Was there to be no attempt to uplift the standards of the race for whose Government we had assumed at least a share of the responsibility? This idea was certain to prove repugnant to the English habit of mind.

Here was a dilemma from which in point of fact

there was no escape. As to education, Cromer has left on record his opinion that "there can be no doubt that, if the English had from the first had a free hand in the matter, greater progress would have been made than has actually been the case".<sup>1</sup> And there can be no doubt that the same thing was true in regard to "law and order". But British policy did not permit of such a remedy: and we may regard it as interesting evidence of the ruthless cruelty of political theories when we find that the very same publicists who most ardently supported the original policy were the first to attack the Egyptian administration for a failure in regard to education caused entirely by that policy. They blamed Cromer for his failure, yet his failure lay in having adhered too closely to their own theories. Under the limitations of that adherence, he had been compelled to put up with abuses, which could only have been remedied by discarding it.

Such briefly was the measure of progress which the British Occupation had secured for Egypt by the year 1904. The Departments of Finance and of Public Works could claim a very considerable success, the Departments of Justice, Education, and the Interior had been compelled or had decided to restrict their aspirations—and here progress was not so marked.

The Occupation had achieved these results in spite of the fact that it stood outside, and had no openly recognised part in, the Government of Egypt. The British Officials were the servants of that Government, the Consul-General was, by legal status, merely one of many accredited representatives of foreign Powers. But by a fortunate accident there was in

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt*, p. 530.

Egypt an army belonging to the Power which he represented—and the happy result of this astonishing phenomenon was that what the British Consul-General said had to be listened to by the Egyptian Government, and what their own British servants said had also to be listened to if the same Consul-General so indicated.

Meanwhile, the *de jure* Government was at this time divided into seven departments, presided over by Egyptian Ministers. In addition to the five above mentioned, there were departments of War and Foreign Affairs. This Council of Ministers was the Khedive's advisory Council, and the Khedive was the Government, fulfilling *de jure* all the functions of Governmental authority, except in so far as his powers were restricted by the overlordship of the Sultan, or by the privileges reserved to foreign residents under the Capitulations.<sup>1</sup> Turkish suzerainty imposed no important restraints upon the Khedive in regard to internal administration: the size of the Army was fixed at a certain maximum, however, and political treaties could not be concluded with foreign Powers.

In addition to these external restraints upon autocratic authority, the British Occupation had at its inception endeavoured to plant in Egypt an embryo which might develop into some form of popular in-

<sup>1</sup> These privileges were described in one of Cromer's despatches as follows:

"First, the Mixed Tribunals adjudicate upon all civil and commercial suits and disputes connected with the ownership of land, between Europeans and Egyptians, between Europeans of different nationalities, and between Europeans and the Egyptian Government;

"Secondly, Consular Courts, applying their own national laws, adjudicate upon criminal charges and suits of succession;

"Thirdly, the Egyptian Police may not violate the domicile of a foreigner until Consular authority is obtained; and

"Fourthly, the Egyptian Government must obtain the consent of all the Powers before imposing direct taxation upon Europeans."

tervention in the activities of the State. There were in each Mudirieh Provincial Councils elected upon a universal suffrage. There was a Legislative Council of thirty members, fourteen of whom were nominated by the Government, fourteen elected by the Provincial Councils, and others by the more important towns. There was a Legislative Assembly of eighty-two members, consisting of six Ministers, thirty members of the Legislative Council, and forty-six delegates elected from among those who paid direct taxes of not less than £30 per annum. These two bodies did not have any powers other than advisory, except that no new direct tax could be imposed without the approval of the Assembly, and in practice, therefore, their views had as much or as little importance as the Ministers chose to accord them.

The same was not the case, however, in regard to the views of the high European officials who were to be found in all the Departments. These officials were in theory either subordinate or advisory to the Minister, but in the event of important disagreement, behind the official was the authority of the Occupying Power, and His Majesty's Government had made it perfectly clear that it expected its views on important matters to be accepted by the Government of Egypt.

In order to complete this brief summary of the curious state of affairs which existed in Egypt in the early years of this century, it is perhaps necessary to add a description of the composition of the various Courts of Justice. In addition to the Native Courts, there were the Mixed Courts, the Consular Courts, and the various religious Courts, of which the Malakim Sharia, or Moslem Courts, were the most

important. The Mixed Courts, as we have seen, decided civil, commercial, and land cases between Europeans and Egyptians and between Europeans of different nationalities, and also had a very limited criminal jurisdiction. They were the achievement of Nubar Pasha and owed their existence to agreements which he had succeeded in concluding with the Capitulatory Powers some years before the British Occupation.<sup>1</sup> The Consular Courts tried civil cases between their own nationals and matters relating to their personal status, as well as criminal offences with which these persons were charged.

The Native Courts dealt with all cases in which both parties were Ottoman (which included, of course, Egyptian) subjects, and all criminal cases in which an Ottoman subject was the accused party. Finally, the Malakim and the Patriarchate Courts decided disputes relating to the personal status of Ottomans belonging to their respective religious communities.

The Mixed Courts administered a body of law which could not be altered or added to without the consent of all the Capitulatory Powers. They stood, therefore, outside and above the legislative authority of the State, and this point brings us inescapably face to face once again with the international difficulties which loomed so large above Cromer's administration. As year after year these difficulties had to be met and surmounted, only to rise again and more formidably ahead, it was inevitable that Cromer should come to regard their removal as signalling the entry into the promised land. His chief hopes and thoughts centred upon the negotiation of an Anglo-

<sup>1</sup> The agreement with Great Britain will be found in Appendix A at the end of this volume.

French agreement in regard to Egypt.<sup>1</sup> And when this agreement was achieved in 1904, he was ready to recite his *nunc dimittis*. French hostility would now cease, and with that cessation, the Capitulations would begin to lose their sting, and he would be able to set his Egyptian house rapidly in order. But, in reality, the years after 1904 brought, instead of happy fulfilment, only further disillusion. Cromer had been wrong in his original diagnosis: the real cause of our difficulties was not international discord, but the false and insecure basis of our position in Egypt. We were building still upon foundations of sand. The years of insecurity were not over; they were still to come.

<sup>1</sup> "I most earnestly hope, not merely on Egyptian but on more general grounds, that you will continue the negotiations vigorously. We must manage to come to terms. . . . I regard this as by far the most important diplomatic affair that we have had in hand for a long time past. . . . We must not fail. If we once come to terms with the French, we are bound to carry the thing through, and this on every ground."—From letters of Lord Cromer to Lord Lansdowne, quoted in *Lord Lansdowne*, a biography, by Lord Newton. (The whole of chapter x. of Lord Newton's book contains most interesting information in regard to the negotiation of the Anglo-French agreement.)

## CHAPTER II

### THE CAPITULATIONS

THE Capitulations are nowadays liable to be regarded, and with some justification, as the price which a backward Government, incapable of maintaining order in its own territories, has to pay in order to secure the influx of foreign trade and capital.

In their original form the rights granted to capitulatory foreigners in Ottoman territory, including Egypt, were:

- (a) Freedom to live in the country and carry on business.
- (b) Religious immunity.
- (c) Exemption from the special taxes to which non-Moslems were liable.
- (d) Protection from the Ottoman authorities, who were not permitted to enter the special quarters in which foreigners lived.
- (e) Independence of the Ottoman Courts, which were at that time purely religious courts, applying the Sacred Law of Islam.

These rights were in their nature clearly special exemptions from conditions universally obtaining in Moslem territory, where infidels were ordinarily penalised for their lack of belief. The Turks, how-



ever, were not of themselves capable of organising a flourishing commerce, and realising the advantages which they were thus losing, they were prepared to make concessions in order to secure the immigration of foreign business. Christian nations thus secured concessions for their nationals as part of a mutual bargain, regarded as satisfactory to both parties: and it was not until the Ottoman power began to wane that these concessions came to acquire the status of jealously guarded privileges possessing the moral sanction which attaches to a higher stage of civilisation. Since they have attained that status they inevitably form a stigma upon the countries where they obtain, which is much resented, and is a constant source of irritation and hostility. They are accused of being an unjustified restriction upon the country's sovereign independence, a bar to its political development, and, because they are open to abuse, a cause of lawlessness.

But before all these charges can be admitted, some examination is necessary of the position of affairs which the Capitulations had in practice brought about, by the time of which we are writing and which remains substantially the same to-day. First of all, the foreign resident in Egypt had under the Capitulations a privileged position in regard to the trial of civil and commercial suits. Originally all such suits in which he was defendant were tried by his Consular Court, but when he was plaintiff, he had to sue his adversary in the Native Courts, or before the latter's Consular Court, as the case might be; a few years, however, before the British Occupation, negotiation with the Powers had secured the setting up of the courts called the Mixed Tribunals, before which civil and commercial suits of all kinds were tried. These

Mixed Tribunals consisted of a majority of European judges, who were in practice nominated by the Powers. They were thus a definite restriction upon the sovereign power of Egypt, which country had not the unqualified right to appoint its own judiciary. And more hampering still was the fact that these courts could not apply any new legislation which the Egyptian Government might decree, without the consent of all the Capitulatory Powers. The resulting disadvantages were extremely serious. Not only had new legislation often to be dropped altogether, but in all cases it became inevitable that there should be prolonged delay. There were fourteen Capitulatory Powers. A modification in proposed legislation made to meet the objections of one Power might convert to disagreement a Power that had previously consented, and at each stage in the negotiation a reference was necessary to all the important capitals of Europe. "The President of the United States and the King of Sweden have to give their consent before the provisions of any new law can be applied to the subjects of the Emperor of Austria or the King of the Belgians."<sup>1</sup> An obvious result of such "legislation by diplomacy" is to weight the scales heavily against progress, and to open the door to every variety of "log-rolling".

The second privilege which a European possesses is that of being tried by his own Consular Court under his own national laws when charged with a criminal offence. The result is that in Egypt there are large sections of the community who are immune from the restraints of those criminal laws which are framed with especial reference to the circumstances of the country in which they dwell. This

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt*, p. 262.

privilege has been frequently abused in practice to the grave detriment of Governmental authority, Egyptian law-breakers having sheltered themselves behind "men of straw" of some European nationality, and so obtained immunity. And it is superfluous to stress the drawbacks which arise out of having operative in a single country so many varieties of criminal law.

The privilege of Inviolability of Domicile is in practice subject to the same abuse. "Each of these large foreign communities includes a considerable number of natives who have been allowed by methods which, at any rate in the past, would not always stand enquiry, to acquire the same rights of protection as those enjoyed by residents of undoubted foreign extraction. Amongst them are to be found some of the most undesirable elements of the Levant, who chiefly use the privileges conferred by the Capitulations to defeat the law of the land, and often to escape the penalties which, in any other country, would speedily overtake their nefarious practices. Nor is that all. They lend their names to Egyptian subjects of the same kidney, with whom they enter into clandestine and collusive partnerships. Every illicit trade can thus be carried on with relative impunity not only by foreign but also by Egyptian subjects under cover of the Capitulations."<sup>1</sup>

But it must be remembered that the right of inviolability of domicile, with the passage of time, has been to some extent eroded. It is not now necessary, for example, that a consul should always attend in person, provided due notice has been given him that the authorities propose to enter in person the house of one of his nationals. Further, a foreigner can always be arrested in a case of *flagrant délit*. In spite, how-

<sup>1</sup> Chirol, *The Egyptian Problem*, p. 62.

ever, of these modifications, this particular privilege seems the most difficult of all to justify. It is a survival from conditions which have long since passed away, when the foreign communities lived in separate quarters in which their consul assured the maintenance of public order: and in the conditions now existing the difficulty of assuring public order is much enhanced if the police powers of entry and search are unreasonably restricted, or if the local authority has not the right to issue warrants for these purposes.

The last privilege, whereby no direct tax could be imposed upon Europeans without the consent of all the Powers, is often alleged to be the most restrictive in its effect upon the Egyptian Government: it is urged that if the Egyptian Government had imposed upon the Egyptians any large tax which the rich foreign communities were not called upon to pay, the resentment aroused by this patent unfairness would have been so great as to counterbalance the pecuniary advantage. The only course open to the Government, therefore, was to forgo revenue from many sources which are tapped as a matter of course by other Governments all over the world.

There is probably a large measure of truth in this statement, but the practical remedy is not easy to find. In the first place, it must be remembered that the whole of the external and much of the internal commerce of Egypt has been built up by the foreign communities, and that the industry and finance of the country is very largely conducted by them. They thus form a very wealthy minority, upon which a "popular" Government would have every temptation to lay unfair burdens. This could only be done by the imposition of direct taxes, and in Oriental countries such taxes are not easily assessed or collected. The

foreign business-house, with properly kept books and banking accounts, would be strictly mulcted, but the Egyptians who might be liable to any direct tax would find it very much easier to deceive the authorities and evade the law, and the result would be a discrimination in practice which would operate unfairly against the foreigner. The foreign residents are not unnaturally alive to this danger, and it is easy for them to quote instances from recent Turkish and Egyptian history which go to show that in these two countries there is still alive a prejudice which requires restraint. The system which exists in practice can, therefore, be described not inaccurately as follows: Foreign residents are not immune from taxation which Egyptians have to pay, but they have a right of obstructing the imposition of new taxation. If they exercise this right, it is not because they are anxious to shirk a legitimate burden, but because their knowledge of local methods of assessment and collection leads them to fear that injustice to themselves would result.

What is very certain is, that with the commencement of the British Occupation the Capitulations ceased to be merely an armament defensive against Egyptian misrule, and became offensive weapons to be used with considerable effect against Great Britain, not only in Egypt but wherever she was vulnerable. France had always viewed the British Occupation with undisguised hostility: the Capitulations provided her with a means whereby she might constantly obstruct its activities and assault its prestige. But there were other parts of the globe also in which the interests of the two powers clashed, and if at any moment of tension the British in Egypt had some measure they were eager to promote, the

French were not slow to seize their opportunity and to take advantage of the diplomatic weapon afforded by the Capitulations. This pernicious but tempting example was followed at various times by all the other Powers.<sup>1</sup> The vicarious suffering thus imposed upon Egypt did not add to the popularity or detract from the difficulties of the British Occupation. In fact, the Capitulations, during the early period of the Occupation, had united with the financial machinery set up by the law of Liquidations and the Convention of London to erect barriers to progress which must often have appeared to Cromer and his staff to be insurmountable. The financial problem had been solved largely by Cromer's own genius, and the vexations inherent in that situation were no longer so grievous. But the Capitulations, especially now that "internal" administration was urgently demanding reform, loomed larger and larger. It had indeed become difficult to foresee how progress could continue to be made. The chief problem seemed to have crystallised itself at length into a choice between stagnation—an eternal prolongation of the existing state of affairs—and the extinction by hook or by crook of the Capitulation privileges.

At this juncture the Anglo-French Agreement appeared like manna from heaven. Signed in 1904, it removed at a stroke all the irritating financial restrictions under which the Egyptian Government had till then laboured. And it went further still in the Declaration of April 8, 1904, which provided as follows: "His Britannic Majesty's Government

<sup>1</sup> Even the Portuguese Government saw fit at one time to refuse consent to a house-tax, by means of which it was proposed to pay for the Cairo drainage system. There were few, if any, Portuguese householders in Cairo at the time, but there was some colonial advantage in Africa which Portugal desired, and obtained at the expense of Great Britain.

declare that they have no intention of altering the political status of Egypt. The Government of the French Republic, for their part, declare that they will not obstruct the action of Great Britain in that country by asking that a limit of time be fixed for the British Occupation, or in any other manner."

To this declaration the Governments of Germany, Austria, and Italy subsequently agreed.

Its importance would be difficult to exaggerate. To Cromer himself it undoubtedly came in the light of a seal of success upon his work in Egypt. To him it seemed that a new day had dawned. In despatches written at the time he described the Agreement as constituting "a fresh point of departure in Egyptian affairs". The recognition of the British Occupation he regarded as intensely significant. In the same despatch we read: "the fact that Egyptian administration is now under the guidance of a European Power entirely alters the situation which has heretofore existed".<sup>1</sup>

This sanguine forecast is much modified in the more considered review of the Agreement which he wrote later in the dispassionate atmosphere of retirement, and after a lapse of some years. "England gained by obtaining a practically valid sanction to a position which was previously, to some extent, irregular. I had for long been convinced that early withdrawal of the British Garrison from Egypt was quite impossible, but I never regarded lightly the

<sup>1</sup> Chapter x. of Lord Newton's *Life of Lord Lansdowne* brings out very clearly what was the essence of the situation, and in what particulars Cromer's forecast was inaccurate. The French in reality had no intention of modifying their hostility to the British occupation of Egypt. They were prepared, in order to secure a position which they coveted in Morocco, to surrender that hostility to the extent of giving formal recognition to the *status quo*: but they were not willing to surrender, and, in actual fact, never did surrender, their desire or their powers to obstruct the growth of our influence in the Nile delta.

non-fulfilment of the engagement to withdraw.”<sup>1</sup> Recognition, therefore, he still regards as a large step forward. Of the benefits which had in the first flush been expected from French and other European co-operation he writes less hopefully: “Egyptian progress will now, it may be hoped, continue to advance without being hampered by that somewhat acute stage of international rivalry which has been productive of so much harm in the past”.<sup>2</sup> There is a note of disillusionment in this sentence, which is repeated in the illuminating paragraph with which the Chapter concludes: “A further Egyptian question remains behind. It consists in gradually adapting the institutions of the country to the growing needs of the population. Possibly time will also solve that problem, but unless disaster is to ensue it must be a long time.”<sup>3</sup>

We have seen how much part Cromer himself took in bringing about the Agreement, and that it was a consummation for which he had long and earnestly hoped. When it was achieved, he undoubtedly thought that it heralded the extinction of the Capitulations, and at once set about evolving a scheme to this end.

In his annual report for 1904 he outlined a proposal, obviously long considered, that “the Powers should transfer to Great Britain the legislative functions which they now collectively possess”, and indicated that one necessary consequence “would be the creation of some local machinery which would take a part in the enactment of laws applicable to Europeans”.

He gives an interesting account of difficulties which lay in the way of legislating for the foreign residents. “The practice has been to assemble a

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt*, p. 392.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 393.



Commission composed of the Diplomatic representatives in Egypt. These latter delegate enquiry into the special points under discussion to a Sub-Commission composed almost entirely of the Judges of the Mixed Tribunals. It is natural enough that both in the Sub-Commission and the Plenary Commission differences of opinion should arise. Every one of these differences, even though they may only refer to minute points of detail, has to be referred to all the fifteen Powers concerned."

His solution, which he propounded not as a cut-and-dried scheme, but as a stimulus to criticism and discussion, was a separate Council, additional to the existing Legislative Council and General Assembly, "composed wholly of subjects or protected subjects of the Powers which were parties to the Treaties under which the Judicial Reforms of 1878 were accomplished. Legislation proposed to this Council by the Egyptian Government, approved by a majority of that body, and promulgated by the Egyptian Government with the assent of His Britannic Majesty's Government, would have the same force and effect as if it had received the assent of the Treaty Powers." The Council was to consist of twenty-five to thirty members, of whom a minority were to be nominated by the Egyptian Government. And the British and Egyptian Governments were to declare that they had no intention of changing the fundamental principles of the existing civil and criminal laws.

The attitude which the French Government had adopted since the Agreement in regard to other less important proposals must have prepared him for a certain measure of disappointment. For it was not very long before it became apparent that this atti-

tude had undergone no revolutionary change. During 1904 and 1905 proposals had been under discussion with the Capitulatory Powers for amending the laws administered by the Mixed Tribunals, and the course of these discussions brought to light no symptom of any tendency in the French Government towards a general acceptance of Anglo-Egyptian proposals. Indeed in regard to what was perhaps the most important amendment proposed their attitude was definitely obstructive. This proposal was briefly that a separate department should be created under the Egyptian Government for the registration of deeds relating to land transfer, which is in all countries regarded as a purely administrative service. Up to this time the work of registration had been in the hands of the Mixed Courts, but the Egyptian administration was perfectly competent to undertake it, and the advantages of a separate and unified department of registration were obvious. The Egyptian Government showed a most accommodating spirit in regard to the proposal, and were prepared to concede that the Director-General of the new Service, and even the principal Registrars, should be appointed subject to the approval of the Mixed Court of Appeal. The French Government, on the other hand, announced that they considered the proposal would constitute a radical change in "*L'état des choses actuel*", and did not even authorise their representative at Cairo to discuss it. This attitude was all the more incomprehensible in view of the capitulatory difficulties which France had herself experienced in Tunis: difficulties which French authorities assessed with a logic and lucidity<sup>1</sup> which appear to

<sup>1</sup> "*Les difficultés que devait faire cesser l'organisation de la réforme financière et de notre contrôle sont relativement peu de chose auprès des complications*

have completely deserted them where Egypt was in question. This must have been a serious disappointment to those who had understood that the recent Agreement morally bound the French Government to favourable consideration of proposals much more important and far-reaching than the one at present under discussion.

Cromer was one of that number, and he must by then have realised, if he had not done so before, that his design for the extinction of the Capitulations was to meet with very serious opposition. He persisted, however, with his proposals, and returned to them again in the last of his annual reports: even though in the interval it had become clear that foreign nationals resident in Egypt were no more ready to welcome them than were the principal European Governments. The International Chamber of Commerce in Egypt, in reviewing his original proposal, made it clear that they regarded the present position as not unsatisfactory, and the change outlined as *plein d'imprévu*, and by no means likely to afford sufficient guarantee of security, in view of the existing condition of the police and other branches of the internal administration. Even the British community was uncertain of the possibility of securing a satisfactory International Council. It was to such critics that Cromer addressed himself in his last report,<sup>1</sup> making public the weighty view that "the

inextricables et des abus que la multiplicité comme la toute-puissance des juridictions européennes en Tunisie avaient fait naître. Sous prétexte de protéger les Européens contre l'arbitraire et le désordre du Gouvernement Beylical, les Capitulations leur assuraient des privilèges qui s'étaient étendus démesurément à mesure que l'autorité locale s'affaiblissait; ce qui n'était à l'origine qu'une exception était devenu plus fort que la règle en sorte que l'administration indigène eût-elle été animée des meilleures intentions du monde, s'était trouvée peu à peu complètement paralysée."—*La Politique française en Tunisie*, par P. H. X., p. 360.

<sup>1</sup> 1907.

only possible Egyptian nationality which can ever be created must consist of all the dwellers in Egypt, irrespective of race, religion, or extraction". "So long", he wrote, "as the régime of the Capitulations exists, not only must the Egyptians and foreigners be divided into separate camps, but also no thorough solidarity of interests can be established between the various communities of Europeans *inter se*". He pointed out that his proposals did not involve judicial reform, as some critics appeared to think, but were directed to amending the legislative situation by setting up a local council empowered to pass laws applicable to all European residents. This to him was the crux of the problem. "Its first care", he thought, "should be to create criminal courts empowered to punish the violation of any laws which it may pass". "I hold strongly that the efforts of all Egyptian reformers should, for the time being, be mainly concentrated upon this one point."

The vision into the future vouchsafed to him was not comprehensible to the foreign residents. Their outlook was naturally and quite justifiably more self-centred, and they found no good reason to follow him into the dangerous paths of nation-building. Disappointed in this direction, it was still open to Cromer to hope that Egyptians themselves would warmly welcome his proposals. They alleged that the progress of Egypt had been retarded, that the prestige and authority of the Egyptian Government had been impaired, by the existence of the Capitulations: and he had framed a proposal which provided for their virtual extinction.

But even from Egyptians no support was forthcoming, and for so friendless a proposition the pigeon-hole was the only asylum. It was not only that

Cromer's vision was too far-reaching for the comprehension of the "dwellers in Egypt". It was not only that Egyptians were incapable as yet of recognising their own best interests. An unexpected and important new factor was making itself felt. The historic Agreement of 1904, while procuring little change in the European angle of vision, had produced a considerable reorientation in the political thought of Egypt.

With the establishment of financial stability, backed by an ever-increasing material prosperity, the earlier fear of international interference and control had been largely diminished, and in 1904 it was entirely removed. The British Occupation was no longer, therefore, to be regarded by Egyptians as a bulwark against the inevitable alternative of internationalism: but more and more as an arbitrary restriction of Egyptian freedom.

There was no longer any reason for those who hated the Occupation to refrain from attacking it too hotly lest worse should befall them. There was also the enticing consideration that the Occupation must now stand or fall by its own inherent merits. Its existence depended ultimately upon the support of the people of Egypt: and if only these could be persuaded that it had no virtues, but was brutal and self-seeking, surely their support would be withdrawn. Considerations of policy and the promptings of natural aptitude both urged the desirability of an intense campaign of vilification. And in the years between 1904 and 1907 the campaign was actively prosecuted in the Egyptian Press. The time was ungratefully chosen. Egypt's campaign of venomous hostility against the Occupying Power opened at the very moment when that Power was lifting from Egypt's

back one of the heaviest burdens that Ismail Pasha had bequeathed to her. Wisdom and justice went unheeded, and once again was witnessed the ever-recurring phenomenon of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart.

## CHAPTER III

### EGYPTIAN NATIONALISM

THE history of Nationalism in Egypt starts for the purpose of our story with Arabi's revolt of 1882. That revolt had styled itself a "national revolt". Arising out of a purely military grievance against the preference shown for Turkish officers, it had grown into a movement against all privileged foreigners, and at the moment when it was suppressed it was still rallying to the cry of "Egypt for the Egyptians". Nationalism was not, therefore, the outcome of the British Occupation, and, as was perhaps inevitable in a backward country, it had come to birth in an atmosphere of fanatical extremism. Arabi's revolt would, but for our intervention, undoubtedly have developed into a ruthless persecution of all unbelievers, and the British authorities had always to reckon with the bigotry and credulity of the populace, and the standing which these offered to leaders of a "national movement". Against such a movement, should its promoters decide to make unscrupulous use of the weapons ready to its hand, Great Britain was singularly ill-equipped to fight. Owing to our reluctance to add Egypt to our imperial responsibilities, and our desire to avoid international complications, we had taken up a position which was gravely weak-

ened by its anomalies. In a despatch addressed to the Powers on January 3, 1883, Her Majesty's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Lord Granville, informed the world of the policy we intended to pursue. "Although for the present a British force remains in Egypt for the preservation of public tranquillity, Her Majesty's Government are desirous of withdrawing it as soon as the state of the country and the organisation of proper means for the maintenance of the Khedive's authority will admit of it. In the meantime the position in which Her Majesty's Government are placed towards His Highness imposes upon them the duty of giving advice with the object of securing that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character, and possess the elements of stability and progress."

This policy, as has been seen, remained the basis of an Occupation much more prolonged than was originally contemplated, and therefore left that Occupation singularly vulnerable to attack. Because of it, the position of the Consul-General was anomalous, the highest authority in Egypt, but possessing no more legal authority than any other Consul-General: the position of the British troops was anomalous, not employed by the Government of Egypt, not even invited to assist by the Government of Egypt—accidentally present, yet supporting the whole structure; the position of the British officials was utterly anomalous—legally servants of the Khedive, in practice taking their orders from the Consul-General.

If this was the result of our policy upon internal organisation, it was equally disadvantageous in regard to matters external. It meant that in order to secure the complacency of the Powers towards an Occupation which continued in spite of our promises



to withdraw, Egypt had to be treated as a pawn in the diplomatic game: for twenty years and more her interests had to be subordinated to considerations of high diplomacy, and even long after there remained an unfortunate habit of giving too much weight to external considerations and too little to internal. "It is certain that if we had grasped the Egyptian nettle boldly, if we had proclaimed from the first our intention of exercising, even for a time, that authority which, as a matter of fact, we do exercise, we could have made the situation not only much more endurable for Egyptians, but much easier for ourselves".<sup>1</sup> We could have secured the removal of the Capitulations, and thereby put ourselves in a position to reorganise the whole field of Egyptian administration, instead of working in a much restricted field only: so that Egyptians constantly complained that while we ordered them about ourselves, we did nothing to free them from the interference of others.

Many reasonable and patriotic Egyptians were irritated beyond measure by our powerlessness, in spite of the domination we had assumed, to free them from the manifold abuses and restrictions arising out of the Capitulations. Many who endeavoured wholeheartedly to co-operate with us were incensed and estranged, because amid the numerous anomalies of our position they never knew where they were with us: we allowed them a free hand in one direction, and constrained them in another: there was no clear division of function, and every encouragement to intrigue: and meanwhile we were prevented, both by our position and by external restraints, from remedying many gross evils which cried out for reform.

Nationalism was faced, therefore, with a veritable

<sup>1</sup> *England in Egypt*, p. 61, Lord Milner.

*embarras de richesse* in selecting its weapons and its field of attack. It could parade our promises of speedy evacuation which were not fulfilled: it could point to the continued undiminished existence of foreign privileges, to which we had merely added a foreign domination: it could point to the failure of that domination in more than one direction. It could work with good hopes of success among all the educated classes of the population. The one field that remained obstinately barren was that comprising the masses, and without success there it could achieve little.

Cromer faced this situation with his usual calm courage and perhaps more than his usual detachment. He saw that the policy which was now being enunciated as the moral justification of our continuance in Egypt was also the most secure practical basis for our Occupation. Considerations of humanity and expediency alike pointed to the conclusion that the welfare of the great mass of the population must be our constant goal, and led him to adopt as a cardinal maxim of Egyptian administration that the burden of taxation must at all costs be restricted. An alien domination could not in his view be expected to be liked by the people. He quotes as obviously apposite a sentence written by Sir Herbert Edwards a few years after the annexation of the Punjab: "We are not liked anywhere . . . the people hailed us as deliverers from Sikh maladministration, and we were popular so long as we were plastering wounds. But the patient is well now and he finds the doctor a bore." And in Egypt there were special factors tending still more in his view to diminish the likelihood of loyal affection. The population was largely Mahomedan, nourished in a fanatical dislike of unbelievers. Its ruling classes, though to a great extent non-Egyptian, and having

little sympathy with the masses, were naturally hostile to the British, whose advent had deprived them of the great opportunities for exploitation they had previously possessed. Pride and self-interest alike urged them to work for the restoration of the "good old days", while a common and fanatical religious faith provided a bond between them and the masses, by which they might hope upon occasion to stir the latter to take an indirect part in their anti-Occupation campaign.

But still Cromer believed that our successful care for material welfare would form an effective counterweight. The nationalism of Arabi had withered with the suppression of his revolt, and in the first years of the Occupation there was no favourable soil in which it could take root again. The change worked by the British was too beneficent, and the memory of past oppression and injustice too recent.

But Egyptian nationalism, even if it was quiescent, was not by any means dead. Egypt for practical purposes may be regarded as a homogeneous country; there are differences of race and religion among certain sections of her population, but the main structure is homogeneous enough, and under the influence of Western ideas and an administration to some extent Anglicised, genuine nationalism was bound to grow steadily until it became a force to be reckoned with. Such a growth was neither to be feared nor deprecated in itself—it would provide the natural bulwark against oppression which we desired to see established. The danger was that the forces of reaction on the one hand, or of anarchy on the other, would subordinate it to their ends, and use it as a stalking-horse in their attacks upon the Occupation.

It is certain, for instance, that the Khedive Abbas

Hilmi, very soon after his accession in 1892, began to fan the spirit of extreme nationalism in order to give practical vent to his growing hostility towards the existing régime. He was astute enough also to see that by diverting Egyptian political aspirations into anti-British channels, he was postponing the day when his own position would be assailed by the democratic tendencies which those aspirations were bound to develop. He found an admirable agent for this purpose in Mustapha Kamel. It is an interesting symptom of the state of Egypt that Mustapha Kamel, the founder of modern Egyptian nationalism, owed the inception of his career to the interest of a Frenchwoman. Mme. Juliette Adam, who acted the part of Egeria to the young Egyptian, was of Armenian extraction and the presiding deity of a political salon fairly well known in the latter years of the last century. Through her influence Mustapha Kamel became Secretary to a French politician and acquired that hostility to England which animated his subsequent activities. In person he was active, good-looking, and well—perhaps rather too well—turned out: he was excitable and eloquent with more force of character than is usually possessed by Egyptians. But the really symptomatic fact about him was that his culture was essentially French and that as a Moslem he was not devout, not even particularly *croyant*. Such was the leader who became the pioneer of the young nationalism: the older Moslems looked somewhat askance at him: but the students followed him eagerly, and, when he died, mourned him with real fervour. If he preached the doctrines of Pan-Islamism, it was not with the old devotion but in the new opportunist spirit which inspired the Committee of Union and

Progress. It was a great asset to him that he commanded, in common with many other Eastern agitators, a pen that was extremely facile in violent denunciation.

Egyptian nationalism had never been very strongly pro-Turkish in its sympathies, although it was always prepared to range itself beside Turkey in any dispute with Christian Powers, and Mustapha Kamel had an opportunity of using this tendency in 1905. In that year the Powers in combination were putting pressure upon the Sultan to secure the Macedonian Reforms, and Moslem feeling was rising in Egypt as a result. *Al Lewa*, the paper of which Mustapha Kamel was editor, lost no time in fanning that feeling by a series of violent Pan-Islamic articles, and it is interesting to note that in one of the series occurs a very definite allusion to Germany's friendship for Islam, and to the necessity of profiting thereby.

In 1906 a further opportunity for arousing Mahomedan feeling occurred in the dispute which arose between Egypt and Turkey in regard to the Eastern boundary.<sup>1</sup> Had such a dispute developed ten years earlier, the effect upon our position in Egypt would have been very grave. But even in a decade much of the stimulative power of the call of the faith had been lost. The writer has in his possession a copy of an anonymous letter sent to Cromer which powerfully describes the influence Islam could have asserted over its followers at the end of the previous century. In 1906 the call of the faith in danger would have awakened, except among a few, echoes far fainter than ring in this despatch. But the memory of the voice of power and of the instant re-

<sup>1</sup> Rafa-Akaba-Taaba dispute.

sponse of loyalty was still alive: the grave music of the Arabic prose is worthy of its theme and none of it is lost in the Biblical English of Mr. Boyle's translation. The languages of passionate faith have an audible affinity. The letter runs as follows:

In the Name of God, &c.

TO LORD CROMER,  
H.B.M.'s Agent,  
The Reformer of Egypt.

It is well known to you that the telegrams and newspapers appear each day bringing nearer to us, as it seems, the likelihood of grave differences between England and the Empire on matters relating to our land of Egypt. But as the hopes of men for things desired are often disappointed so also—for God is merciful to His creatures—do their fears of evil come to nought. We pray the Almighty that it may be so now. I who write these lines in the name of "All the people of Egypt" am not a statesman or a man of great name; my person and my dwelling are alike unknown to you, but I feel constrained inasmuch as I see many foolish acts committed and hear many foolish words spoken, to stand on my feet and say the truth, as I think God has put it into my heart.

It is often said by fools, or by those who think thereby to make favour with the great—"The curse of God upon the Christian": "May hell consume the unbeliever, his household and his possessions": These are unbecoming words, for curses pollute the lips of the curser, and the camel lies in wait for the driver who smites him unjustly.

At the head of this letter I call you by the name of the "Reformer of Egypt" and by this name you are known between the seas and the deserts; also many, but not all, of the English who serve under you have followed in your footsteps as wise children carry on the traditions of their fathers. He must be blind who sees not what the English have wrought in Egypt; the gates of justice stand open to the poor; the streams flow through the land and are not stopped at the order of the strong; the poor man is lifted up and the rich man pulled down; the

hand of the oppressor and the briber is struck when outstretched to do evil. Our eyes see these things and we know from whom they come. You will say "Be thankful, Oh men of Egypt! and bless those who benefit you", and very many of us—those who preserve a free mind, and are not ruled by flattery and guile—are thankful. But thanks lie on the surface of the heart and beneath is a deep well. While peace is in the land, the spirit of Islam sleeps. We hear the Imam cry out in the Mosque against the unbelievers, but his words pass by like the wind and are lost. Children hear them for the first time and do not understand them; old men have heard them from childhood and pay no heed. But it is said "There is war between England and Abdul Hamid Khan". If that be so a change must come. The words of the Imam are echoed in every heart, and every Moslem hears only the cry of the Faith. As men we do not love the sons of Osman; the children at the breast know their works, and that they have trodden down the Egyptians like dry reeds. But as Moslems they are our brethren; the Khalif holds the sacred places and the noble relics. Though the Khalif were hapless as Bayezid, cruel as Murad, or mad as Ibrahim, he is the Shadow of God, and every Moslem must leap up at his call as the willing servant to his master, though the wolf may devour his child while he does his master's work. The call of the Sultan is the call of the Faith: it carries with it the command of the prophet (blessings, &c.). I and many more trust that all may yet be peace: but if it be war, be sure that he who has a sword will draw it, he who has a club will strike with it. The women will cry from the house-tops "God give victory to Islam". You will say "The Egyptian is more ungrateful than a dog, which remembers the hand that fed him. He is foolish as the madman who pulls down the roof-tree of his house upon himself." It may be so to worldly eyes, but in the time of danger to Islam, the Moslem turns away from the things of this world and thirsts only for the service of his Faith, even though he looks in the face of death.

May God (His name be glorified) avert the evil!

Signed by one in the name of the people of Egypt.

CAIRO: *May* 10, 1906.

The Akaba dispute ended peacefully, and the nationalists could only use it to arouse temporarily a certain warmth of religious feeling, which could be employed, while it lasted, to serve political ends. But the masses were not imbued with national, or indeed with any kind of political feeling, and they had not the slightest sympathy with any movement which aimed directly at restoring Turkish influence, or regaining political power for the old ruling classes. Nor was Pan-Islamism a force that could really move them. The British authorities were at intervals stirred to serious anxiety in regard to the strength and prevalence of this doctrine, and it was used, as opportunity occurred, by certain European Powers to promote the objects of their aggressive policy; but in reality its terrors seem to have been largely illusory, and subsequent events have made it clear that there was no truth in any forecast that it might endanger the stability of Government in Egypt. The Turco-Italian War and the subsequent campaigns in the Balkans would have given rise to grave trouble in Egypt had that country been at all affected by Pan-Islamic propaganda. What actually occurred served only to show how astute had been the use which the nationalist party had made of the meagre weapons to hand, and how entirely without foundation the fears which many British officials had entertained and expressed.

Cromer himself had obviously not been seriously impressed by these fears, or by any anxiety that the growing activities of a hostile Press or propaganda would result in violent outbreaks against the Occupation; although as a measure of precaution in view of the growing unrest, he had pressed for and obtained an increase in the strength of the British garrison, he still felt confident that the fellaheen were too



prosperous and too contented with their present lot to fall a prey to agitation. He had steadily opposed any restriction upon newspaper violence, although the Egyptian Ministers themselves were often very restless under its stream of abuse: and it is probable that the event would have proved him wise both in his estimate and his policy had it not been for the unfortunate incident of Denshawai.

That incident had such important results upon the course of Egyptian history that it is necessary to recall it in some detail.

On June 13, 1906, a party of British officers went to the village of Denshawai, near Tanta in the Delta, to shoot pigeons there. The fact that they were going was known to the Omdeh of the village, and apparently to the villagers also. On arrival at the village they separated to take up different stations from which to shoot. Whether by premeditated resentment, or because their hostility was aroused by some injury, fancied or actual, the villagers turned out and surrounded them, evidently in a dangerous mood. There was ample room for misunderstanding, because the officers concerned were unable to understand, or make themselves understood, by the villagers. They appear, however, to have acted with restraint, and to have handed over their guns, and endeavoured to signify their willingness to go away. Unfortunately one of the guns was accidentally discharged after being handed over, and this was the signal for an outburst of violence on the part of the villagers, who assaulted the officers and injured two of them seriously, and one so badly that he died soon afterwards. The medical evidence was that his death was due to exposure to the sun in a condition of physical injury and shock.

The assault aroused throughout Egypt reprobation which was at first universal. Even the *Lewa*, which by its anti-British diatribes had no doubt contributed to cause the incident, recognised that the British officers had shown great forbearance under provocation, and was concerned only to prove that there had been no premeditation or political motive.

Had an equal forbearance been shown in the punishment, the incident might have been forgotten with the lapse of time. But unfortunately, upon the villagers found guilty, the Special Court, set up for their trial, passed sentences of which Cromer himself wrote that they "though not unjust were, I may now readily admit, unduly severe".<sup>1</sup> Cromer was in England at the time, otherwise it is difficult to imagine that the subsequent blunder would have been committed. It was the kind of barbarity which is generally dictated by panic. The sentences both of death and of flogging were carried out in public.

The result was to arouse at length that spirit of discontent among the fellaheen for which Mustapha Kamel and his fellow agitators had long been seeking in vain. Now at length his diatribes would and did fall upon favourable soil. The resentment aroused throughout the country was fanned by an ever-increasing violence of hostility in the Press, and was marked by the occurrence of other cases of lawlessness against Europeans. For the time being even the Copts' standing quarrel with the Moslems was forgotten, and Mustapha Kamel was at last able to secure a national unity with which to menace the British Occupation.

It is strangely illuminating to observe how far this

<sup>1</sup> *Abbas II.*, Preface, p. x.

single incident went towards undoing the respect and admiration won by twenty years of unremitting and disinterested service. However generous and sincere the policy of an alien domination, however numerous its beneficent acts, they weigh but little against one misdirection of justice or one act of oppression. It is not our habit to endeavour to keep alive in the memory of the races we govern the instances in which they have benefited by our presence. On the other hand, there is always a large class of hostile agitators whose life is spent in keeping green the recollection of the few injustices we have committed. Upon these sedition flourishes, and without them it could not long survive. All the false stories which it puts abroad would receive no credence were it not for the one or two instances in which its allegations are true. Thus by a single error of judgment a Government may lose in time its whole reputation for fair dealing, however well deserved.

"The lamentable Denshawai incident", wrote Sir Valentine Chirol, "is not forgotten to the present day. The extreme severity of the judicial retribution . . . was honestly regarded by most Egyptians, and not only by Egyptians, as needlessly vindictive. No Englishman can read the story without a qualm of compunction. Trivial grievances, often of a personal character, help to explain the increasing jealousy of British ascendancy in the newly-educated classes and especially amongst Egyptian officials, but it is Denshawai that rankled with the fellaheen."<sup>1</sup>

Denshawai was, in fact, the opening of a new chapter in Egyptian history. Many other factors were contributing to the spirit of unrest, which now for the first time assumed serious dimensions. Mere

<sup>1</sup> *The Egyptian Problem*, p. 93.

lapse of time had dimmed the terrors of the old régime; material prosperity, and the spread of western education, were uniting to cause a political restlessness. That this restlessness was turned successfully into channels genuinely hostile and liable to become violent was due in no small measure to this single incident at a small village in the Delta.

Cromer himself, as we have seen, was not in Egypt at the time, and the reports which were sent home throughout the summer of 1906 by those who had been left in charge were not instinct with the same calm insight which always characterised his periodical reviews. In the present series Egypt was described as being in a continued state of crisis, and it was alleged that the people were uncertain whether the British were either desirous or capable of maintaining order at all costs. A little more patience and a little less anxiety might have afforded as valuable a proof of firmness and courage as the measures which were actually taken, and would certainly not have been productive of such enduring resentment.

If the British officials in Egypt found themselves in a critical situation, it soon transpired that the leaders of the Nationalist Party had their own difficulties to face. A great deal of money had undoubtedly been employed in purchasing the violent support of the Press, and in particular it was now widely believed that the Khedive was actively supporting the anti-British campaign. Where buyers were offering such good prices, it was natural that sellers should fall out; and in the subsequent quarrels the abuse that was bandied was by no means discreet. The newspaper *El Watan* almost openly accused Mustapha Kamel of having received money from the Khedive. It was, in fact, becoming high time to practise a little

discretion, and the necessity was more intimately felt when the Press of Europe began to draw alarming pictures of the increasing fanaticism of Egypt. Those who controlled the Press were appalled at the possibility that the growing prosperity in which they were sharing might be injured by a fall in Egypt's credit. The editors were at once at pains to rebut these charges; and columns which until lately had reverberated with Pan-Islamic propaganda were now filled with careful proofs of the civilised and rational outlook of the Egyptian nation.

Cromer, too, had for some time been at work upon a policy, calculated as he thought to offer a much more sober and effective check to the Nationalist Party's campaign. He knew that there were in Egypt a large number of moderate-minded men of influence and standing who did not by any means welcome the activities of Mustapha Kamel and his fellow-workers. Equally patriotic, they were more broad-minded and far-sighted, and they desired to achieve political progress by more cautious and constitutional methods. He had been endeavouring to procure among them some form of active organisation by which their views might be propagated and their aims promoted.

As a result of his efforts there was formed in October 1907 a new party—the Party of the Nation—"Hisb-el-Umma", with its own newspaper, *El Jerideh*. Of this party the most promising member was one whose name has since become the most important of all names in modern Egyptian history.

Saad Zaghlul was of true Egyptian origin—a fellah of the fellaheen—and this was perhaps the most important fact about his whole career. Having taken up the legal profession, he was in due course given charge of the legal affairs of Princess Nazli. It was at

the instigation of that great lady that he acquired the knowledge of the French language, without which he would never have embarked upon a political career. His next step forward was his marriage to a daughter of the Prime Minister, and staunch friend of Cromer, Mustapha Pasha Fehmy. At the period with which this chapter deals he was therefore highly connected politically, and had already shown distinctive qualities of courage and moderation. He was a true Egyptian—he was a believer in the British connection—and he was strongly opposed to the activities and policy of the Khedive. It was only natural, therefore, that Cromer, convinced of the necessity of encouraging moderate Egyptian opinion—no doubt pleased also that he could at the same time show a last favour to his old friend Mustapha Fehmy—appointed Saad Zaghlul as Minister of the newly-created Department of Education. It was the inauguration of a new policy devised to strengthen the British connection: and destiny ironically decreed that it should be also the inauguration of a career which was to deal a series of rude blows to that connection

## CHAPTER IV

### CROMER AND THE FOUNDATIONS HE LAID

IN May 1907, Cromer retired from his post in Egypt, to become his own most dispassionate critic. For long his achievement was in many quarters regarded as transcending all criticism, and then by inevitable reaction it began to meet with disparagement. Certainly he himself made no extravagant claims, entertained no flaming hopes as to what its ultimate value might be, and showed a singular sense of proportion in assessing what had been done. His chief fault in the eyes of his critics was in reality nothing else than his extreme patience and forbearance. His active life had extended almost beyond its natural span into an age which no longer tolerated long views but clamoured for "quick returns". And it was inevitable, therefore, that he should be accused of not caring sufficiently for progress. In an age when speed seemed all-important it became the fashion to talk of "a return to Cromer's policy" as an alternative which could be seriously contemplated only by the most reactionary spirits: and many politicians have fallen into the error of supposing that in reality Cromer was quite content that things should go on as they were: that in his heart of hearts he regarded the British Occupation of Egypt as permanent, and

failed to recognise the changes that were taking place there.

This view appears, to a greater or less degree, to colour all the appreciations of his tenure which have appeared in later years. But in order to discover how far it is justified, it must first of all be ascertained what his policy was, and for this we need go no further than the chapter entitled "The Future of Egypt" in his own book. The first quotation which is apposite runs as follows: "So far as can at present be judged only two alternative courses are possible. Egypt must eventually either become autonomous, or it must be incorporated in the British Empire. Personally, I am decidedly in favour of the former of these alternatives".<sup>1</sup>

As to the pace at which such movement could be made, he did not consider that it need be regulated by any desire to establish more than a minimum of good Government. "All that we have to do is to leave behind us a fairly good, strong, and—above all things—stable Government. . . . We need not enquire too minutely into the acts of such a Government. . . . But it is essential that . . . the Government should, broadly speaking, act on principles which will be in conformity with the commonplace requirements of Western civilisation."<sup>2</sup>

He envisaged therefore a steady movement in Egypt towards a clearly defined goal, and not towards a Utopia which might never, or only after centuries, be achieved. But at the same time he most emphatically did not wish that Egypt should work towards a false conception of autonomy, only to find that she had wasted her strength upon a sham. What he desired was true and stable autonomy for Egypt;

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 564.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*



and he regarded it as better for the country that there should be some delay in attaining this than that the ideal should be lost. In his view, genuine autonomy could only come when the Capitulations were extinguished. This again could only be brought about by a Constitution "which will enable all the dwellers in cosmopolitan Egypt, be they Moslem or Christian, European, Asiatic, or African, to be fused into one self-governing body".<sup>1</sup>

He had, in fact, a clear perception of the facts, and faced them squarely with a sincere regard for the best interests of Egypt. The solution which he propounded was not acceptable at the time, and others have been substituted; but they have not produced very satisfactory results, and it is still questionable whether the best interests of Egypt will be promoted by any of them. Nor is his solution open to any justifiable charge of being reactionary. With all our changes in "angles of vision" and "avenues of approach" we have not succeeded actually in advancing very far beyond it to-day. All we have really done is to become more impatient for results, and more uncertain as to the means of obtaining them. Our impatience leads us to condemn Cromer's solution as too slow, but it is still true that plants of forced growth are not certain to be hardy, and genuine autonomy could have no natural development in a country where special protection was still necessary for foreigners.

In point of fact, the Capitulations are a stumbling-block which no honest worker for Egyptian independence has been able to evade. They were not introduced by the British Occupation, but existed long before its commencement. Had we at any time in the

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 568.

past fifty years surrendered all our interests in Egypt and removed entirely from her territory, she would still have had no independence worth the name. Her powers of legislation and taxation, of enforcing the laws already existing, and of punishing evil-doers would still have been subject to crippling restrictions. Cromer could justifiably claim that in his proposal for an assembly comprising all the international elements of the Nile Valley he had desired for Egypt the highest possible status which she was capable of attaining, and the kind of constitution which alone could justify the much desired abolition of the capitulations. His critics, however, had neither the full knowledge nor the breadth of vision which he possessed: and were, therefore, impatient of his caution and inclined to belittle his difficulties. In particular he was very commonly accused of having neglected the moral and intellectual improvement of Egypt for a purely material development of her resources. It was an accusation of which he felt the injustice very deeply and he was at great pains publicly to refute it. It seemed to him intensely unfair that, after he had in so short a span as twenty years introduced into the administration an entirely new standard, in which there remained but small traces of the old corruption and immorality, he should be accused of having neglected moral progress. But moral progress meant different things to him and to his critics. To him it meant an administration steadily becoming more upright and impartial: to them it meant something much more nebulous. They considered that a pro-consul must be counted as having failed in his duty if he had not grafted an Anglo-Saxon mentality upon an Oriental stock. They urgently desired a swifter advance towards political freedom, and being prepared,

in those days, at least, to admit that the pace of such advance must depend upon local conditions, they impatiently demanded of Cromer that he should have wrought a miraculous transformation in the nature of the people; and this he had not achieved.

As Sir Valentine Chirol points out, "The moral and intellectual regeneration of a people is not a task in which it is possible for any man or group of men to command success—least of all if they are aliens and of a different religion and civilisation. . . . It cannot in any case be the work of a few years, nor is there much hope of carrying it through when practically no help can be looked for from the other side."<sup>1</sup> And Cromer himself had some wise words to say upon this subject. He asked his critics to try and remember what they meant by self-government in Egypt. "The indigenous art of self-government had already been acquired in 1882, and we know with what results: no European instruction would have been able to improve on its recognised canons. What Europeans mean when they talk of self-government is that the Egyptians, far from being allowed to follow the bent of their own unreformed propensities, should only be permitted to govern themselves after the fashion in which Europeans think they ought to be governed." What, in fact, the critics above mentioned failed to see, and what Cromer neither did nor indeed could point out to them, was that their attack should have been made not against him alone, but against Egyptians also.

Their charge was to this extent true, that material prosperity had taken precedence over all other objects in the mind of the administration. But how in the circumstances could it have been otherwise? The con-

<sup>1</sup> *The Egyptian Problem*, p. 83.

dition was inevitably imposed upon Cromer by the state of affairs with which he was confronted. Foundations must be the first concern of the builder, and foundations were either rotten or non-existent in the building which he was asked to occupy and repair. It was not till 1904 that they could be said to be in a fit state for a superstructure to be erected upon them, and between that date and Cromer's retirement only three years intervened: a fleeting moment in the scale by which the lives of nations are measured.

When it came to the next stage, the stage of moral and intellectual regeneration, it could not be said that Cromer had impeded Egyptians from setting their hand to the task involved. He had raised the Education Department to the dignity of a Ministry, and had consigned it to the direction of Zaghlul, at the time one of the most prominent of the moderate school of Nationalist politicians. Whatever others may have thought as to the wisdom of the choice, Egyptians at least are estopped from regarding it as contrary to their national interests. The step was moreover entirely in consonance with the policy laid down for the guidance of the British Occupation. But—perhaps for that very reason—it was not in the least likely to bring about the kind of moral and intellectual progress which would ultimately produce satisfactory self-government upon the Western model. It was the policy which was at fault. Cromer was simply doing his best to carry it out, and he cannot justly be blamed if the policy was inherently incapable of producing the results intended from it.

At the same time Cromer evolved and published the scheme already described, by which he thought it would be possible for a genuinely autonomous Egypt to work out its own salvation. He could do no

more in this field than point the way and set an example. He had done both to the best of his ability, and in a measure far beyond the capacity of most men. The rest was for Egypt to do. He had no illusions in regard to the situation or the possibilities inherent in it: he did not desire to force the pace of advance or needlessly to prolong the Occupation. At the same time, he resolutely refused to turn his eyes away from inconvenient facts, such as the Capitulations or the pledges which England had made before she really examined her task.

The most definite article of his creed was assuredly this: that the British occupied Egypt as trustees—not of British interests, or of the capital of foreign bondholders—but of the welfare of the Egyptian masses. And perhaps the policy of which he expected most was that, whatever difficulties might arise, we should never be “weary in well-doing”. His faith was not, however, of that ruthless, insensitive kind which believes that well-doing is sufficient, and that other considerations may be disregarded. His general policy was never unmindful of natural aspirations, and in the conduct of the administration he was always insisting upon the necessity of sympathy and insight. In his last annual report he took pains to warn the British officials under him that “to obtain the sympathy and goodwill of Egyptians is as important as to be honest and just”.

Had the fundamental principles of the policy which he laid down been constantly adhered to, the state of Egypt might be happier than it is. But the War provided an absorbing preoccupation, and in the pursuit of victory many principles were obscured and many essential rules of administration were forgotten in Egypt. When at length she emerged, it was into

another epoch, very different from that which Cromer had known.

Even in 1907 a definite change had come over the scene. In Egypt, with material development and with the relaxation of international financial control, there had come a large extension in the activities of Government, and therefore in the complexity of the machinery required.

At the same time the process of waxing fat and kicking was at work at last, and continuing prosperity was fostering a spirit of self-confidence, with its corollary of political restlessness and impatience of restraint.

In England the Conservative administration, which had given Cromer its entire confidence and almost a free hand, had come to an end, and been replaced by a Liberal Government, eager, after its years in opposition, to make itself felt in all quarters, and to shake things everywhere out of their grooves. In Cromer himself the years had wrought their inevitable change. He had grown ill and tired with the long period of hard work and responsibility: and ready to recognise that younger shoulders would better undertake the novel burdens imposed by changing conditions. For long he must have felt that with the completion of the first part of his country's task in Egypt, and after the anxious struggle of the early years, he had earned his repose, and could take it with a clear conscience. For a quarter of a century he had held unchallenged sway over the destinies of Egypt, and for a quarter of a century she had been advancing steadily in prosperity and national stature. With his departure a well-defined epoch in her history came to an end. Political and not material problems were in the future to be of the first importance, and to demand the closest attention.

He had overcome the material difficulties by a successful use of a wise and patient caution. He would have confronted political problems also in the same spirit, and it might have gone far towards finding a solution. Caution may not always be the best method of approach, but in the midst of grave perplexities it is certainly a valuable reserve asset in guiding the political development of an Eastern nation. The question that continually arises is not, shall we advance? But, at what pace shall we advance? To the correct answer there has never been a trustworthy guide, and perhaps it is inevitable that progress should be by a series of false steps on this side and on that of the path. But in the years before 1907, at any rate, there were at least two signposts which no colonial administrator could for long disregard with impunity. On one was written that the interests of the masses were the first concern, and on the other that the sense of proportion must never be lost. Cromer never allowed himself to forget the first, and he was naturally endowed with more than an ordinary share of capacity for objective detachment. It is wide of the mark to say that honest government was his simple panacea for the ills of the world, and to regard him as naturally opposed to change. He was a Liberal in politics, and always so regarded himself; but he did of course possess, in common with the great Liberals of the nineteenth century, an unfaltering faith in his principles.

Of these the foremost was the belief in our trusteeship for the masses. Out of it was engendered that strong conviction of moral authority which was shared by Mr. Gladstone and his contemporaries, and which enabled them to be firm even to the point of sternness in enforcing measures which they be-

lieved to be right. But nowadays that principle has largely lost its force: our faith in it is gone, and with it has gone the moral authority which is essential for firm administrative action. Nor is that the only reason why the task of administration has become so difficult for our generation. We have surrendered one firm principle, but we have not discovered another to take its place. We flirt with a belief in universal political freedom, or with a belief in democratic institutions, but in each case only half-heartedly, and all the while in our minds is a vivid memory of the advantages of the old belief we have discarded.

From another point of view also, Cromer's political upbringing has importance—and the fact that he had worked from the outset of his career in close touch with the leaders of Liberal opinion. There is no doubt that when he went to Egypt in 1883 as Consul-General, he went with a strong prejudice in favour of an early evacuation of the country. He himself affirms this, and there is confirmation of it from independent sources. There was clearly no section of English thought which at that time desired to add Egyptian territory to the Imperial domain. It was true that for a long time the importance of Egypt had been its geographical position in regard to our line of communications with India, and in this consideration lay the underlying motive, if not the immediate cause, of our action in 1882. But it was not in response to this consideration that we occupied Egypt. And once the Occupation had been made, the British Government had two objects which excluded all others, but were unfortunately themselves mutually exclusive. They desired such a reform of the administration as would ensure that in future it would be stable and comparatively humane. And at the



same time they desired to withdraw the British forces as early as possible.

It soon, however, became apparent, first, that the desired reforms would take a long time to carry out, and second, that in the absence of British troops no reform at all would be possible. So the lavish promises of a speedy evacuation had to remain unfulfilled. In view of the facts there was no alternative. And by inevitable consequence the Occupation came to be regarded not as a temporary expedient, but as a moral necessity, to be terminated only in some remote future, and only when its moral justification had ceased to exist. We had vastly improved the condition of the Egyptian people, and we must remain in occupation of Egypt so long as our presence was necessary to maintain that improvement.

But whatever practical justification there might be for the continuance of the Occupation, it must be repeated that it had no legal basis at all. Egypt was still a part of the Ottoman Dominions: and the only intention that Great Britain had publicly announced in regard to it was an intention to withdraw at an early date.

No Continental Government could have remained satisfied with so indefinite and illogical a position. But the British Government quite obviously preferred it to any attempt at legalisation. They never at any time welcomed any suggestion that the position should be regularised or defined, but were perfectly content to rely solely upon arguments based upon the humanity of their conduct. And indeed so long as material conditions continued to have the first importance, such arguments probably sufficed. The situation would be liable, however, to become very different as soon as political problems came into prominence.

The future, fraught with earth-shaking events, could not, of course, be foreseen: but it has always been true that standards of conduct, moral and humane, are liable to change. Such a change had only to occur for the ground to be cut from under the feet of the administration in Egypt. Without legal standing, and with no roots in the affections and loyalty of Egyptians themselves, but with African and imperial interests which could not be surrendered, the British Government would find itself in a situation of chaos.

Cromer might have prevented that possibility if he had succeeded in awakening in Egyptians any sentiment of loyalty to the British Empire. With all his qualities of diplomacy, wise sympathy, and insight, it is just possible that he could have achieved this. But he never attempted it. He never apparently, even for a moment, regarded it as within the bounds of possibility. It seems probable that the whole cause of this attitude lay in the fact that he always regarded evacuation as a principal object of policy. But it is also clear that because of the promise to evacuate, and because he was convinced that Egypt had a long road to travel before she could attain genuine autonomy, he omitted from his considerations how that autonomy was to be reconciled with our imperial interests. Our communications with India and Australia, our commitments in the Sudan, were of supreme importance. If their safety was to be ensured, and Egypt was at the same time to receive real autonomy, it was essential that some tie of sentiment should be forged between the Empire and Egypt. Perhaps he considered that the gift of autonomy would itself forge the necessary bond; for up to the date of his retirement he maintained an entirely

negative attitude towards the possibility of securing some foothold in the sentiments of the Egyptian people.

And so it came about that when Lord Cromer left Egypt in 1907 there were few residents of any race who had gratitude to demonstrate. He drove, we are told, to the station at Cairo through silent if not sullen streets, and departed to England unaccompanied by any expressions of regret from those he had served so long. His own temperament, philosophic, almost cold in its power of abstraction, would not have led him to count upon any warmth of demonstration; and his deep insight and long experience of Man the Governed must have warned him of the probable course of history. But even to him it must have seemed, as he cast his mind back over the years since 1882, that the immediate reward was not commensurate with the achievement. What he had done for Egypt had been of inestimable value to almost every class of her population. We need not, however, suppose that he would have nourished any illusions in regard to the enduring quality of his work. It is more probable that he felt secure only in the unchallengeable sincerity of his intentions: and in that friends and foes alike have never ceased to believe.

## CHAPTER V

### SIR ELDON GORST AND THE NEW POLICY

LORD CROMER's successor in Egypt was Sir Eldon Gorst. Gorst had had a brilliant official career, a great part of which had been spent in the service of the Egyptian administration, which he had joined in 1890. He entered the service as an official in the Ministry of Finance, subsequently became Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior, and in 1898 was appointed Financial Adviser. In the latter office he had carried out a policy congenial both to himself and Cromer of careful economy, while as Adviser of the Interior he had formed at first hand very definite conclusions in regard to the shortcomings and difficulties of that much criticised department.

His past history was, in all probability, at once an advantage and a disadvantage to him in his new position. Although he had been out of Egypt and employed at the Foreign Office for some time before his appointment as Consul-General he had worked there so long that he was sure to be regarded by his former colleagues as one of themselves. Familiarity is prejudicial to personal authority, and personal authority had been the foundation of Cromer's position, and of the individual control which he had long maintained over all departments of the

Administration. For the task which lay before Gorst, it was essential that he should maintain that control, at any rate over the British personnel. If fundamental changes were to take place in the policy of the British Occupation, they could only be successful if he carried with him either by authority or persuasion the British officials in every department.

For acquiring the necessary authority he was no doubt handicapped by his previous close connection with Egypt, and it is not clearly apparent that he was endowed with the natural gifts which would have made him overmasteringly persuasive. He had brilliant mental qualities—a power of clear and logical thought being the foremost. To these were added a fund of confidence in his own judgment, a steady ambition, and an amazing capacity of concentration and persevering industry. But it was undoubtedly a defect in him that he was unable to play. His days were not entirely spent in the performance of official duties, but none of his pastimes involved any diminution in the tensivity of his persevering concentration. In games and sports alike he was always studying earnestly to acquire some new proficiency, and seldom benefiting by the recuperative enjoyment which comes from complete relaxation. It is probably the fault of mankind in general that they are apt to regard such a temperament as a thought priggish and uncongenial to their own lazier views of life. But Gorst had a task of more than common difficulty before him, and required all the aid that personal force and magnetism could bring. For it seems clear that the Liberal Government then in power had expressly selected him for the purpose of introducing a new spirit and a new practice in Egypt, and that he had received definite instructions to this

end from the Secretary of State, Sir Edward Grey. It must at once be admitted that there is no written evidence to support this view, but it has been widely held for many years: and although it has been many times publicly asserted it has never been contradicted. Cromer's considered view upon this point is contained in the following sentence written seven or eight years later: "Sir Eldon Gorst made a thoroughly honest and very courageous attempt to carry out the programme *which, if it had not been dictated to him from the Foreign Office—a point as to which I am not in possession of sufficient information to justify any expression of opinion*—was actually prescribed for him by the circumstances with which he had to deal".<sup>1</sup>

In view of the silence of those who could have spoken with authority, the impartial historian will perhaps be constrained to agree with this judgment in regard to instructions from Whitehall. But he will hardly be able to accept the view that circumstances rendered Gorst's programme inevitable. There was undoubtedly considerable need for administrative reform in Egypt at this time, but it can scarcely be denied that the political reforms which Gorst introduced responded much more to the demand of Liberal opinion in England than to any need inherent in the circumstances in Egypt.

We have seen that what the critics alleged in disparagement of the previous régime was that the moral and intellectual education of Egypt had been neglected in favour of material improvement. Assuming that this was true, and that material recovery was now so complete and permanent that the time had come for advance in other directions—in that case it would seem that what Egypt needed was a

<sup>1</sup> *Abbas II.*, Preface, p. xi.

reform of her interior administration, so that the law might become deservedly respected: the energetic development of a sound system of primary education: and finally the encouragement of local self-governing institutions.

But this programme was very different from what Liberal opinion in England demanded. The publicity given to recent events in Turkey had grievously misled that opinion. It read that a constitutional form of Government had been granted to the subjects of the Sultan as a result of the courageous demands of a small band of enlightened patriots: and it hailed the event as the long delayed awakening of the East to the beauty of Western political ideals. If the Sublime Porte, so long the type of reactionary tyranny, was being so liberal in its behaviour to its own subjects, surely Great Britain could not lag behind but must hasten to gratify in some measure the aspirations of Egyptian politicians.<sup>1</sup> The alien rule which was strangling their natural development must be relaxed.

Meanwhile, Egyptian politicians were experiencing very different reactions. The Nationalists who had been most vehement in attacking the alien Occupation and demanding its cessation were acting in

<sup>1</sup> "The general movement against autocratic government in the neighbouring Mohamedan countries which has been the main political feature in the East during the last year, has not been without effect upon the state of public opinion in Egypt. That opinion has, of course, been more especially impressed by the revolutionary changes which have occurred within the Ottoman Empire itself. Though, as has been frequently pointed out, the great mass of the Egyptian population remains profoundly unaffected by political issues, there exists among the better educated sections of society a limited but gradually increasing class which interests itself in matters pertaining to the government and administration of the country. . . . Though the conditions of Turkey and Egypt are entirely different, and though no real analogy can be drawn between the two races, the fact that parliamentary Government has been peaceably established in the former country has given considerable encouragement to those here who hold the view that Egypt is ripe for a similar régime."—Gorst's *Annual Report*, March, 1909.

more or less close alliance with the Khedive, who was widely believed at all events to be an important source of their material supplies. The victory of the Young Turk Party over the Sultan was therefore not an incident to which they could accord an enthusiastic welcome without embarrassing consequences. Moreover, the new régime in Turkey was based ostensibly upon the principle of wide religious equality, whereas one of the most useful and valued weapons of the Egyptian Nationalists had been an unrestrained appeal to religious fanaticism: so that here also there was the necessity for some hard thinking.

The Khedive also must have suffered considerable discomfort at the news. The example of Turkey was not one which he could wish to see followed in Egypt, and if it was now to be held up as an admirable precedent by his present allies, it would be necessary for him to revise his system of alliances. Such was the political position when Gorst assumed control in the summer of 1907, and began to consider the policy which he should pursue.

The problem was one of some complexity. Of the considerable forces in Egyptian public life at the time the first was the Khedive, whose motives were a strong enmity against Cromer and all who had supported or been supported by him, and a desire to increase his own power and prestige. The second was the Nationalist or "patriotic" party—Hisb-el-Watan—whose prime motive was an intense hostility to the British Occupation—hostility due to a mixture of causes ranging from sincere fanatical patriotism, through all the degrees of political grievance, to an unashamed ambition to return to the *status quo ante*. The third was the recently formed popular party—Hisb-el-Umma—of moderate but sincere patriots, who desired



the steady political advance of their country with the help of the British as long as that help might be necessary and forthcoming. The Khedive had fostered and supported the activities of the former party, and had regarded the latter with ill-disguised hostility.

Of these three forces the second was clearly irreconcilable, and in the year 1907 no section of British opinion was prepared to waste time in attempts to conciliate it. The third might possibly be induced to co-operate in and support a reasonable measure of political advance. But the reactions of the Khedive to any programme were almost impossible to foretell, addicted as he was to intrigue and liable to be swayed by personal rather than by patriotic motives.

Unfortunately, however, it was inevitable that if the British control was to be in any way relaxed, the relaxation must be in favour of the Khedive. Under the existing constitution such a step could only operate to place more power in his hands. He was the *de jure* ruler and it was by means of his decrees that the Government functioned. More than this, the prestige of his position was still a very powerful force which strongly affected the attitude of Egyptians towards his wishes: and he had, besides, a remarkable personal power over individual Egyptians with whom he came in contact. It was useless, therefore, to concede a freer hand to the Council of Ministers: they could not use it except in accordance with the wishes of the ruler. Apart from the fact that constitutionally they were only his advisers and had of themselves no governing function, they had as yet no moral force to resist his pressure unaided. The same was true of the legislative bodies: a drastic revision of the constitution which would give them legal powers of control was at this stage unthinkable.

And even if it were carried out the Khedive would still remain in practice master of the situation.

Assuming the value of the democratic principle, the only wise course—indeed the only possible course—was to build up, patiently and carefully, a spirit of responsibility and independence among the people which would be capable of resisting the pretensions of autocracy. And this is what Gorst's Provincial Council proposals were framed to achieve. But by themselves these proposals were not enough to satisfy the Government at home or the extremists in Egypt. The Khedive had recently visited England, and had created a very favourable impression there. And the authorities were inclined to be impatient of suggestions that he could not be trusted. They refused to recognise that autocracy was his ideal, and that the one force capable of restraining him was the authority of the British. There was nothing for it, if their wishes were to be carried out, but to give the Khedive more rein, and he would inevitably, and indeed not unnaturally, use this freedom to obstruct the measures of constitutional progress which were being devised.

Gorst can hardly have been blind to this possibility. But against it there was to be set the alternative—unlikely though it may have seemed—that the Khedive could be won from his present hostility by an altered treatment. There was a considerable school of thought which held, and not without some justification, that the Khedive was what he was largely because of the method which Cromer had used towards him. It was argued that at his accession Abbas's position *vis-à-vis* the overshadowing figure of the great Consul-General had been one of great difficulty for a young and sensitive ruler, and that by no means enough had been done to help and

encourage him—was it certain that it was now too late to win back the confidence that had been lost?

At any rate, whether reluctantly by force of circumstances, or spontaneously, it was by way of the Khedive that Gorst began the introduction of a new spirit into the relations between the British Occupation and the Egyptian Government. One of the last things that Cromer had done had been to deliver in outspoken terms a personal warning to the Khedive in regard to his conduct. Gorst held from the first a very different attitude: he was indulgent to the Khedive's whims, put no curb upon his activities, and endeavoured as far as he could to promote his prestige. Opportunities for this soon occurred, and were at once taken. In the autumn of 1907 the Prime Minister, Mustapha Pasha Fehmy, resigned. He had held office for thirteen years—years of rapid and uninterrupted progress—and had always maintained excellent relations with Cromer, founded upon mutual understanding and respect. Cromer made public reference to him in his farewell speech as the greatest gentleman he had ever met, and it was the opinion of all who knew him well that he was absolutely honest and disinterested in his desire for the welfare of Egypt, and in his belief in the value of the connection with England. It was perhaps inevitable that a Prime Minister who maintained such friendly relations with the Consul-General should not be on the best of terms with the Khedive. At any rate Abbas Hilmi had always disliked Mustapha Fehmy, and only Cromer's support had kept the latter in office. Directly it became apparent that the new Consul-General intended to humour the Khedive, Mustapha Pasha Fehmy wisely accepted the inevitable position and resigned on grounds of ill health.

Gorst paid official tribute to the work he had done for Egypt in a reference to his loyal and hearty co-operation with the British in the work of the administration. It was, to say the least, an understatement of thirteen years of statesmanlike work, and was equivalent, by reason of what it left unsaid, to damning him with faint praise. But little interest could now be spared for the past: all eyes were turned towards the future.

The occasion of the formation of a new Cabinet was one which afforded excellent opportunity for a *rapprochement* between the Residency and the Palace, and for the Khedive to exercise a greater share of responsibility. Abbas was fully alive to the possibilities, and proceeded with an eye to the future. He shrewdly accepted the suggestion that Boutros Pasha Ghali should be appointed Prime Minister, and in return secured the nomination to the Portfolio of the Interior of Mohamed Said Pasha, an agent upon whom he could depend.

From the British point of view the appointment of Boutros Pasha was entirely acceptable. He had a long experience of politics and administration, and throughout it he had worked in smooth co-operation with the British authorities. He was clever, honest, and acceptable to the Khedive: he was rich, and widely respected. If it was advanced against him that he was not a Mahomedan, there was the precedent, entirely successful, of Nubar Pasha's long premiership. His creed was the one defect in an otherwise comprehensive list of qualifications—as was pointed out at the time, had the Duke of Norfolk been appointed Prime Minister of England, the two cases would have been closely parallel.

On the other hand, the medal had its reverse side.

The new Prime Minister was a Copt, and therefore vulnerable to popular enmity, if his enemies should find it desirable to foment such enmity against him. In the course of his co-operation with the British, he had signed the Sudan Convention, and had been President of the Special Court which had tried the Denshawai prisoners. For some of the more ambitious of his soi-disant colleagues, the temptations were too strong, and it was not long before intrigues were on foot against him.

But for the moment the key-note was amiability, and the composition of the new Cabinet was well received by the Press. The prestige and popularity of the Khedive were further advanced, in a manner doubtfully politic, when it was decided in December to pardon and release those who were undergoing sentence of imprisonment for their share in the Denshawai incident. The release was made on the date of the Khedive's birthday.

More could hardly have been done to relax control over the ruler of Egypt. But if it could be claimed that the demands of the Government at home had been thus satisfied, the same could not truthfully be said of Egyptian feelings. The Moderate Party, to which the Khedive had always been hostile, could not but view with anxiety and resentment the favours showered upon their opponent: and at the same time they were witnessing what was in practice a reaction towards autocracy, with no sign as yet of the development of responsibility which was the key-note of their programme. Even the Extremists were unlikely to accord an unmixed welcome to this *rapprochement* between the Residency<sup>1</sup> and the Palace,

<sup>1</sup> For the sake of convenience the term "Residency" is used throughout, though until 1914 the residence of the British Representative was generally known as the "Agency".

which if it endured, must surely lead to a weakening of their position.

So far there had been no attempt to deal with what we have concluded, upon the evidence given, to have been the real needs of Egypt. The reform of the Interior administration was a matter to which the Consul-General did give his attention, but, as we shall see later, he allowed his instructions—or his desire—to relax British control, to override the real interests of the people, and the result was a complete failure to effect the needed improvement. This was by no means the last time in which disaster was to result from the subordination to political theories of what should be the persistent and always supreme aim of our imperial rule. It cannot be too often insisted that the good of the people is the inevitable criterion by which our administration stands or falls. Whenever this object is allowed—and unfortunately it has often been allowed—to give place to other objects, our influence and position have invariably at once deteriorated. Education, Gorst did not work upon, perhaps because the time which fate allowed him was too short. But in regard to local self-government he produced a measure which was exactly suited to the needs of the country.

It was early in the ensuing year, 1908, that the Consul-General made public his proposals in regard to the evolution of the political institutions of Egypt.<sup>1</sup> Surveying the whole field, he accorded a general approval to the plan which Cromer had advocated, but in view of its hostile reception he felt it undeniable that no immediate progress was possible along those lines; he therefore sought a less contentious direction of advance.

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report on Egypt*, dated March 7, 1908.

In regard to the deliberative central assemblies which were already in existence, it was beyond doubt impossible to justify any important addition to their powers or any serious change in their composition. For it was incontrovertibly true that in the towns a complete lack of interest was the feature of the primary elections, while in the provinces electors had to be brought in by force and told how to vote. "Thereafter", wrote Gorst, "a certain amount of dissatisfaction is expressed when the electors discover that neither the candidate nor the Government propose to pay them for their trouble."<sup>1</sup> In the second stage of election by elector delegates, there was of course a higher degree of intelligent interest, but in view of the facts no other conclusion was possible than that at which Gorst arrived. "Until the people have made a great deal more progress in the direction of moral and intellectual development, the creation of representative institutions, as understood in England, would only cause more harm than good, and would, as a matter of fact, give a complete setback to the present policy of administrative reform."<sup>2</sup>

From such a conclusion it was an easy, indeed the only reasonable, decision to develop local and not central self-governing processes. It must not, however, be concluded that the underlying premise was sound in the circumstances of Egypt. Provincial development in these circumstances could only, and can only, proceed hand in hand with firm central government. Firm and disinterested control over the Mudirs from above was the prime desideratum, and we shall see later that Gorst's policy made it less instead of more likely that this would be achieved. It is curious in this context to reflect how vacillating

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report on Egypt*, dated March 7, 1908.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

and hasty has been the course of English thought in regard to non-Western peoples. First the decision to promote democracy, then the decision to develop local self-government, swiftly succeeded by an impatient determination to wait no longer for results there, but to experiment with central self-government, then a veritable Babel of controversy, followed by a reaction against democracy and all its works, and a belated appreciation of the virtues of Eastern political forms.

Gorst was taking a decision unexceptionable in logic and wisdom when he concluded that "the gradual development and extension of Municipal and Provincial Councils would provide the classes which aspire to autonomy with a suitable outlet for their activity, and prepare them for the exercise of more responsible functions hereafter".<sup>1</sup>

If political progress was to be the order of the day the decision was a sound, cautious one. There was less risk in an extension of responsibility, if it was to be shouldered only in regard to the internal affairs of the Provinces: and at the same time the results would be quickly seen and felt by the electors themselves, so that here, if anywhere, they would most quickly learn how best to choose their representatives and how to bring them to book.

The Egyptian Provincial Councils had been created in 1883 on the proposal of Lord Dufferin, and until now their principal function had been to elect from amongst their own number the members of the Legislative Council. It was now proposed that they should act as genuine advisory Councils to the Mudir or Governor of the Province. They were to be enlarged so that each Merkez or district should have its

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report on Egypt*, dated March 7, 1908.



own representative: elections and meetings were to be held more frequently. They were to have power to make representations to the Mudir in regard to the administrative requirements of their Province. It was also proposed to enact that they must be consulted as to new local regulations and irrigation projects affecting their Province: and that they should be given definite powers in regard to the organisation of the Ghaffir or village police force, and in regard to elementary education, and for the establishment of fairs and markets. As far also as the Capitulations permitted they were to be empowered to raise contributions for educational purposes, and to exercise some control over the finance of local education. The proposals, though first formulated in 1908, did not receive enactment till June 1909. The struggles which attended their official birth, and their subsequent history, may better be described at a later stage, when considering the general history of the first years of the new policy.

Gorst might now claim to have made a bold bid to satisfy his mentors in England, and he might also allow himself to entertain some faint hope that the Khedive would relax his hostility to the Occupation, and restrain at least that section of Nationalist agitation which he personally controlled. In regard also to that agitation, fortune at first favoured him, for Mustapha Kamel, who had led the Nationalist Party with undoubted qualities of ability and leadership, died on February 10, 1908, and his successor Mohamed Bey Ferid was distinctly inferior to him in power and quality. But Gorst was not content to rest there. There was also the "Popular" or Moderate Party to be reckoned with: and to them he must give some earnest of good intentions. At the next meet-

ing, therefore, of the Legislative Council, which took place on December 5, 1908, the new Prime Minister attended with all his colleagues, and announced that he and they proposed in future to be present at all important discussions in order to promote co-operation and understanding between the Legislative Council and the Ministry.

At this point the story may suitably turn from politics to administration. In the latter field Gorst should have been on firmer ground, for alike by experience as by his natural gifts he was remarkably equipped for the work in hand. He had had particularly intimate experience of the departments of Finance and the Interior, and neither could be said at this time to be functioning satisfactorily. The Anglo-French agreement, of which so much had been hoped, had wrought, among several unexpected and untoward results, a distinct change for the worse in financial policy. The jealous hostility with which the *Caisse de la Dette* had met all proposals for expenditure had made it certain that no such proposal would be put forward unless the arguments for it were so strong as to be unanswerable. The removal of this jealous interference in 1904 coincided with a period of rapidly growing prosperity, when demands for increased expenditure were sure to be insistent, and the carefully built up prosperity of the Treasury made resistance to such demands doubly difficult. The result had been a considerable relaxation of financial vigilance. Expenditure had risen from £E12,492,000 to £E18,926,911 between the years 1903 and 1907; and during the same period there had been a great deal of private activity in regard to the transfer of land, which gradually developed into a boom in land values with a subsequent inevitable

collapse in 1907. This financial fever appears to have been to some extent contagious, and to have communicated itself in a mild form to the Ministry of Finance. Gorst's first action was to appoint Sir Paul Hervey to the post of Financial Adviser, and the appointment justified itself to the full. The Finance Department began again to function as a salutary check upon Government expenditure, which had dropped back to £E16,500,000 by 1911. The financial crisis which had affected many important houses was surmounted: but it was not until 1910 that the revenue recovered its health and began again to expand.

The Ministry of the Interior was the second to claim the close attention of the new Consul-General. The choice of action here was by no means so straightforward, for political and administrative considerations were inextricably involved. There was first of all the question of the relations between the Minister and his Adviser, which Gorst had concluded from his investigations to be thoroughly unsatisfactory.

There was secondly the question of the maintenance of law and order throughout the Provinces. This also had been for many years in a highly disquieting condition, as was disclosed by the statistics of serious crime. There were two causes for this state of affairs, which stood out above all others, and loudly demanded reform. The Ministry of the Interior had the power of appointing the Governors of Provinces, and in spite of every check it had not hitherto been very careful in its selection, with the result that the local control of the police force was in bad hands as a rule. In addition to this there was in force in Egypt a system by which the preliminary investigation and prosecution of criminal offences was entrusted to a

body known as the "parquet", comprised of members of the legal profession and forming a branch of the Ministry of Justice. Between the Police and the Parquet, each under different departments, there had grown up a damaging hostility. The Parquet complained that the Police methods of extorting evidence were so improper that they could seldom accept the evidence proffered by them. The Police alleged that it was impossible for them to bring criminals to book, because their efforts were invariably frustrated by the Parquet. This quarrel in various forms is a well-known feature of local administration in the East. If both the Police and the Prosecuting agency are under one control, as in India at present, it is possible to keep the feud within bounds, and to prevent its worst results. The trouble in Egypt was that the only single authority to whom the control could be entrusted was the Mudir, and there were at the time few Mudirs of whom it could be confidently asserted that they would not grossly abuse so large a power.

The step might have been taken, and the possible resulting evils checked, by reinforcing the British Inspectorate. But unfortunately this would have been entirely inconsistent with the policy which Gorst was in Egypt to carry out. Apart from the apparent check to national progress, the Khedive's favourite Minister held the Portfolio of the Interior, and it would have been unwise, to say the least, to choose his department for an increase of British personnel. The only possible course seemed to be to endeavour by sympathy and persuasion to win the Minister to agree to a bargain—a decrease in the British Inspectorate, provided that the quality of Mudir selected had undergone visible improvement.

Accordingly, as an earnest of goodwill, Gorst appointed Mr. Chitty as Adviser to the Ministry. Chitty was in the Finance Department, and had previously done admirable work as Director of Customs, which service he had most ably reorganised, winning at the same time the loyal affection of the whole department. But his capacity to make a good Adviser was still doubtful, and he owed his present appointment entirely to his known sympathy with and hitherto tactful encouragement of Egyptian aspirations.

Mr. Wilfrid Blunt has two references to Chitty in his Diary. Mustapha Kamel, the Nationalist leader, described Chitty to Blunt as "the only Englishman who could inspire us with any confidence". And Blunt again refers to him as the "only English official who sympathises with Nationalism". It was certain therefore that Chitty's appointment would be welcome to Egyptians, and would be regarded by them almost as a promise. It appears that Chitty himself fully realised what was expected of him. As Adviser, he showed himself at once ready to give the Minister a free hand, and he paid little attention to the protests which were evoked from the British officials subordinate to him. In particular he refrained from interference in the appointments which the Minister thought fit to make, or from insisting that appointment or promotion should be the reward of merit alone.

The consequence was a gradual but progressive deterioration in the standard of administration and it became more than ever unlikely that any visible improvement in the quality of the Mudirs would now be attained.

One other incident had marked the inception of

the new programme. In the spring of 1908 Gorst had summoned the British officials to the Residency and addressed them. If this action was an attempt to take them into his confidence, and to win their confidence in return, it was undoubtedly a wise step. But, to judge by the impression it seems to have created, his audience did not so construe it. One member of that audience<sup>1</sup> has left it on record that to him "the address was no more than a gentle reminder of Great Britain's earlier pledges on the subject of the Occupation". Others took away a less tender impression. Whichever recollection is the true one, it must at least be said that this particular reminder did not promote the confidence among officials which was essential to the success of Sir Edward Grey's policy. By this time, however, the Consul-General and the authority of England were very definitely committed to that policy, and we shall next see what developments, good or bad, actually resulted.

<sup>1</sup> Flgood, *The Transit of Egypt*, p. 185.

## CHAPTER VI

### RESULTS OF THE NEW POLICY

THE period which intervened between the inauguration of Sir Edward Grey's new policy in the early part of 1908 and the end of the year 1909 was one of bewildered uncertainty for all parties. The apparent relaxation of British control, and the promise of impending change, combined to produce an atmosphere of restlessness and excitement which boded ill for genuine development.

Only in the field of material progress matters went on quietly and successfully as before. The heightening of the Assouan Dam had been commenced and was being steadily carried forward. This important work was the final step in the conversion of the Egyptian water system from "basin" to perennial irrigation. The basin system had originated in remote antiquity, and had continued to hold the field until the arrival of the British Occupation. It may be simply described as follows: When the Nile flooded each year, the flood water was allowed to flow over the banks into basins enclosed by dykes and communicating with each other and with the Nile by means of a system of canals. The water, highly charged with fertilising deposit, stood on the land for a month or so, and was then allowed to flow back

again to the parent river. It will at once be seen that this system depended for its success upon the flood level in each year: in years of low flood much land would receive no water; in years of high flood much water would be wasted. The "perennial" system, on the other hand, stores the flood water of the Nile behind the great dams, and regulates its distribution by a scientifically planned chain of canals. It thus creates a reserve against bad years, and at the same time eliminates waste and enables more land to be more regularly irrigated. The raising of the Assouan Dam was the last act in the completion of a vast and successful scheme of hydraulic engineering, which created modern Egypt and made it one of the richest producing areas in the world.

This development of the cultivable area was not without its problems. The danger of inadequate drainage is always present when large schemes of irrigation are undertaken. Drainage in the Delta had hardly kept pace with the extension of the supply of water. But the danger was realised and large works were now being planned and taken in hand. As in the realm of finance, so here the action of the administration under Gorst's direction was steady and beneficial. But into neither matter did political considerations obtrude themselves.

Where the latter came into prominence a very different story was to be told. At the Ministry of Education, Zaghlul was contending with the peculiar difficulties of that department. Having been appointed by Cromer, and being son-in-law to Mustapha Fehmy, he could hardly expect the very cordial support of the Khedive nor probably did he desire it. The Adviser to the Ministry, Mr. Dunlop, was a Scot, who, if he possessed the qualities of his race, was



certainly not free from its defects. Zaghlul began by manfully asserting himself against his adviser's bureaucratic tendencies, but he had not the tenacity necessary to a long drawn out struggle: and he had other difficulties to contend with. The seeds which Mustapha Kamel had sown had borne a rich harvest. The students had eagerly responded to every appeal to their patriotism, however misguided: and indiscipline and turbulence were now spreading throughout the schools. Unless Zaghlul could restore this situation, it would be impossible for him to regain for the Government's educational policy the confidence of the public. But in the atmosphere now engendered, the task was one of special difficulty, unsuited to the new Minister's peculiar genius. His methods were hasty and ill-considered: he showed an unreasonable disregard for routine, and no evidence of a capacity for firm and careful planning. It is more than likely that during this period he began to learn to prefer opposition to office, realising from his own experience how much easier and more pleasant it is to soar aloft in the comfortable elevator of destructive criticism than to climb the steep stairs of constructive effort.

The same spirit was operating by different means in the Department of the Interior, where Mohamed Said Pasha was having a smoother, if ultimately more dangerous, passage. Popular demands were not so exacting in regard to his department, and official obstruction was rendered ineffective by a "sympathetic and popular" Adviser. He was therefore in a position to give a free rein to his native tendencies, and to put into operation the principle of advancement by nepotism and private interest. In Oriental countries this is the principle naturally adopted. It is

held to accord equally with the claims of enlightened self-interest, and with the sacred demands of family affection. No one in authority would disregard it, except under strong pressure, which at this time was not forthcoming in the Department of the Interior. English officials, proud of the standards which had been established by their efforts, and still believing that they were trustees for the people, might exclaim against the new tendency. But their protests were of little avail, if the Adviser was not of their mind.

The resulting deterioration in efficiency came at a bad time: and it was not surprising that in 1909 the Consul-General was obliged to report a steady increase in the figures of reported crime, and particularly in the cases of murder and intended murder. It was Gorst's view that the machinery for reporting crime was growing more efficient, but that the difficulty of procuring evidence remained as great as ever.<sup>1</sup> The fellah was losing that lively respect for authority which years of oppression had bred in him: but he was not acquiring in its place any public spirit or sense of corporate responsibility. And the former process was being accelerated by the spirit of the times, by the deterioration in the standards of administration, and by the propaganda of agitation.

Nor was the situation likely to be really improved by the measure which the Department now set on foot. It was decided to round up the more desperate criminal characters and put them under police surveillance. For this purpose a penal settle-

<sup>1</sup> The task that confronts an administrator in diagnosing the reasons for criminal conditions is much the same in all countries. When reported crime increases, the police can hardly be expected to accept a suggestion of lack of efficiency: the administrator is always invited to accept it as proof of better detection. On the other hand, when crime decreases, the administrator must always ask himself whether methods of detection have deteriorated, although such a question will not always be suggested to him by the police.

ment was organised at Khargeh, and an extensive enquiry was set on foot. In a country where a judicial oath is so lightly regarded the measure was full of risks. It might check crime for the moment, by frightening evil-doers temporarily, but it would also put dangerous powers into the hands of many who might be counted upon to abuse them. The village life of Egypt was saturated with faction and with personal and family feuds; and the opportunity thus afforded for a man, by means of judicious perjury, to place his enemy under permanent restraint, was too tempting to be foregone. The immediate results of the decision were, it is true, not entirely unsatisfactory, but it would have been rash indeed to hope that the improvement would continue.

Meanwhile the Khedive, apprehensive as to what the future might bring forth, was busy endeavouring to draw profit from present opportunities. If there was little to encourage a belief in the stability of autocratic governments, there was at least good hope of accumulating useful material resources and fresh avenues of political activity more freely exploited.

The Nationalists, uncertain as to the reactions which might be expected in Turkey, unable moreover to estimate either the strength which the new Government in Egypt might acquire or the attitude it would adopt towards them, now found themselves without effective leadership. Mustapha Kamel, it is true, had succeeded in establishing a temporary pact between the Moslem and the Copt under the guise of the new Egyptian patriotism. But with his death the uneasy partnership was soon broken up, and the party began to fall under the influence of fanatical Moslems, such as Sheikh Shawish Abdul Aziz. Sheikh Shawish was of Magrabi stock, and having

acquired in his youth a good knowledge of English, he had obtained an appointment as assistant lecturer in Arabic at Oxford. There he enjoyed considerable popularity, which he surrendered in order to return to Egypt and stake his claim to succeed Mustapha Kamel. His English experience pointed to him as being the man who could best enlist the aid of English sympathisers. But having once donned the mantle he became a violent and unrestrained force, preaching war upon unbelievers and attacking the Occupation with more than usual fury. His most flagrant offence had been perpetrated in connection with an incident in the Sudan.

In 1907 a Mahdi had appeared in the Blue Nile Province, and had murdered two officials in cold blood. He had soon been captured, tried, and sentenced to death. Thereupon Sheikh Shawish had stated in his paper, *Al Lewa*, that seventy-three prisoners had been hanged, and thirteen imprisoned in connection with the affair; although actually only the self-styled Mahdi had suffered the death penalty, and only twenty-five persons in all had stood trial. Sheikh Shawish was duly charged with publishing false news prejudicial to public tranquillity, but he was acquitted on a technicality. That so glaring an offence should go unpunished served clearly to show how inadequate was the present state of the law, and it was more than probable that the whole question of the freedom of the Press would come under consideration. The Council of Ministers had long been known to favour some measure of restraint, and it was not unlikely that they would now secure the agreement of the Residency.

The Moderate Party had equally good reason for anxiety. They could not but view with alarm the

relaxation of restraints upon the activities of their declared enemy, the Khedive. Rightly or wrongly they firmly believed that he would use his new found freedom to oppose by every means possible the development of the constitution. And they did not know how far he would be allowed to go without opposition from the Ministry, or intervention from the Residency.

The general uncertainty and irritability began forthwith to display itself in a ceaseless stream of attacks upon the Government. Many whose real grievance was against the Khedive vented their spleen upon his Ministers. The Prime Minister was a Copt and a Christian, and the rising turbulence of religious fanaticism in the National Party could not fail to be directed in large measure against him. The Press was becoming more and more unrestrained against the Government, and the Occupation. And the Legislative bodies were being infected by the contagion. The draft measure for reforming the Provincial Councils was put before the Legislative Council early in 1908, but their attitude towards it was not encouraging. The measure was discussed at length between a Committee of the Council and the Ministry, and as a result an amended draft was submitted to the latter body in June, and they were asked to express their views upon it. But it was only after repeated reminders that they could be brought to any conclusion at all: and that conclusion, which took the form of postponing further discussion until the following April, was barren and disappointing enough. Nor was their attitude upon other important matters any less headstrong or obstructive. They were by now thoroughly infected with the prevailing turbulence, and it was symptomatic that the only

subject which could stir them to prolix enthusiasm was that of "Parliamentary Government". They concluded a barren year's work with a vague resolution in favour of a self-governing constitution, and the General Assembly followed suit.

In spite of every attempt at conciliation both the Legislative Council and the General Assembly remained unstable and untrustworthy, bent only upon their own aggrandisement, caring little for the real needs of the country, and out of touch with its requirements. It was not long before their conduct drew from Gorst the bitter comment that "in reality they represent nothing but the class of wealthy Beys and Pashas from whom they are drawn".<sup>1</sup> Their clamour was all for "a constitution". They hoped that if a constitution were granted their old power would return. The same slogan was adopted by the extremists also. But no one really had any fixed goal. The Nationalists might be hoping to frighten the Khedive into concessions, for he was known to be nervously sensitive, and he might be influenced by the fear of Egypt following Turkey's example. The wealthy Beys and Pashas might be eager for reaction. What was the Khedive's real mind; on which side was his secret influence being really exerted? Amid all these bewildering possibilities and answerless questions what was the true explanation? Gorst could find none that was acceptable, and wrote, by no means reassuringly, "the only course open is to wait patiently until the present excitable and undisciplined frame of mind which seems to have infected a considerable portion of the upper classes, has passed away".<sup>2</sup>

The situation was indeed bewildering to one who had inaugurated a policy of concession as a cure for

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, March 25, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, March 27, 1909.

existing unrest. It was natural that he should only slowly bring himself to believe that unrest was augmented instead of decreased thereby. But there was no escape from this conclusion, and he ultimately came to public expression of it. For the moment he still hesitated to accept it, or to tighten up British control over the Khedive and the administration. Even where sterner measures were inevitable, he was disastrously hampered by circumstances beyond his control.

For there was one step which had clearly to be taken, in order to safeguard the Ministry, to maintain public tranquillity, and to remedy a patent defect in the existing state of the law, and it was taken by a decision to revive the Press Law of 1881. The trial of Sheikh Shawish had clearly shown the inadequacy of the Penal Code to deal with Press Offences, and such offences were daily becoming more rife. Some measure of repression was, therefore, essential in the interests of good government, and the general results which followed its introduction are vividly depicted in the following extract from a record made by a contemporary observer:<sup>1</sup>

“The revival of the Press Law has met with the reception predicted for it last week in the *Times*; from local European journals criticism pitched in a somewhat detached and academic spirit, from moderate sections of Egyptian opinion a certain resentment, mainly because the measure is conceived to have been introduced, for his own benefit, by the Khedive, and from the Nationalist group, voiced by *Al Lewa*, the fiercest of tirades, menaces, and denunciations.

“The position of this extremist organ is, indeed, not enviable at the present juncture. Roundly, and

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Storrs.

not without reason, accused by several contemporaries of having caused, by its own intemperate and unbridled language, this unwelcome action on the part of the Government, faced with a compulsory mitigation of the fanatical abuse with which it has been wont to measure and to delight the credulity of its readers and enjoying, to say the least of it, no striking advantages in the range and accuracy of its information, it considers, rightly perhaps, its own interests to be more unfavourably affected than those of others who have trusted to the more legitimate weapons of journalism.

‘You take my life,  
When you do take the means whereby I live’:

and is sedulously, though covertly, fomenting an agitation through its accustomed foils, the sedentary city workman and the impressionable youth of the student class.

‘It was not difficult to persuade the typesetters and printers’ devils of Cairo that the Law might order the closure of some, possibly of several, newspaper offices, by which act of oppression many true believers with their wives and little children would, for no fault of their own, be thrust into the ranks of the starving unemployed.

‘The discontent of these honest men was widely advertised, and it surprised no one to find the Kasr er Nil Bridge blocked for some time on the afternoon of March 31 by an orderly procession of about 4000 workers who, debouching into the new public gardens by the river, passed an agreeable half-hour in listening to a variety of spirited harangues and in replying with loud shouts of ‘Liberty’ and ‘Down with Tyranny’, some, indeed, so far forgetting



themselves as to cry 'Long live England, the Land of Freedom', and being hastily suppressed by patriot whippers-in.

"Enlightened Egyptian opinion deplores the futility of the whole affair, points out that, however seasonable such practices may be on the first day of the current month, to endanger the lives of harmless passers-by is an odd way indeed of vindicating the freedom of the Press, and warns the irresponsible promoters that the right of public assembly is not invariable throughout the world, nor, if grossly abused, immutable in Cairo."

The old law of 1881, now brought into use, provided for the compulsory registration of newspapers, and the depositing of security: it empowered the Government to suppress newspapers after due warning given, and to close printing presses in the event of publication after suppression. Its revival would probably have had the desired effect, had it not been that the existence of the Capitulations robbed it of a great deal of its force. There was no certainty that it was legally applicable to persons of foreign nationality, and if it was not so applicable, an Egyptian who wished to defy it could easily do so by a nominal transfer of his newspaper to some "man of straw" of foreign nationality. It was not long, in fact, before a test case occurred. In the spring of 1909 an Arabic extreme newspaper entitled *Misr-el-Fatat* was nominally sold to a German subject. The view of the German Government appeared to be that it was doubtful whether the Press Law did not conflict with the Capitulations.

The foreign representatives in Egypt were all prepared to co-operate with the Egyptian Government in the matter, so far as they could: many of the

Capitulatory Powers were willing to see the Press Law applied to their subjects; but the Capitulations are an obstacle not to be so easily surmounted. Although the nominal owner of *Misr-el-Fatat* was easily persuaded to sever his connection with the paper, the uncertainty remained. Protracted negotiations were carried on in regard to the matter: and when it became clear that the German and French Governments held views which were not readily reconcilable either with one another or with the objects of the Egyptian Government, the last named attempted to obtain at least a *modus vivendi* under which the assistance of the foreign Consuls might be somehow secured. But even in regard to the *modus vivendi*, discussion, as always in regard to Capitulation questions, dragged on wearily: the hands of the Egyptian Government were hopelessly tied in the meanwhile, and the advantage which might have been gained by a firm campaign against Press offences was largely lost.

The delay was fatal. The enforced hesitancy had a damaging effect upon the situation. And no relief was afforded by the promulgation in June 1909 of the law constituting the new Provincial Councils.<sup>1</sup> The decree constituted a real step towards self-government, both in itself and in the opportunities for political education and development which it offered. But in the existing atmosphere of intrigue and agitation it passed almost unnoticed. No better effect was

<sup>1</sup> To each Council two members were to be elected from each Merkez by village delegates: the property qualification for membership was fixed at the payment of £50 per annum in land-tax or house-tax, or half that sum if the candidate held a Higher Education certificate. With the exception of the Mudir president, there were no *ex-officio* members, but public servants might attend the deliberation of subjects on which their special knowledge was required. For the rest, the Councils were given powers to make bye-laws, to authorise public markets, and to fix the numbers and pay of the Ghaffir force. They were made local authorities for vernacular education and trade schools, and were to have a much enlarged sphere of activity as a consultative body.

produced when the Government announced that the Legislative Council was in future to be in permanent session every year from November 15 till the end of May, instead of meeting every other month. An even more important concession—that in future Ministers would be prepared to answer all questions which might be put to them on administrative matters of general interest, failed entirely to placate the temper of that body, or to overcome its petulance. The members merely used their increased power and opportunities in subservience to the clamour of the extremist Press. Hypersensitive to public outcry, they bombarded Ministers with obstructive questions. And, as the Press was at this time making much capital out of the question of the Sudan, they persistently opposed all the grants to be voted for that administration. Their only positive activity was to clamour vociferously for full constitutional rights.

It was clear by now that the policy which Gorst had inaugurated had completely failed of its object. Concession had met nowhere with any reasonable response: in all sections of the population it had resulted in increased lawlessness and agitation. The final and decisive crisis was not long delayed, and its immediate cause was the question of the Suez Canal Concession. The existing Concession was due to terminate in 1968, but in the current year the Company made a proposal which, in its final form, provided for an extension of the Concession for forty years, and in return the payment by the Company of a capital sum of £4,000,000, and an annual share of the profits. The offer was on the face of it most profitable to Egypt. The Financial Adviser recommended acceptance. Boutros Pasha and his Ministry agreed. But the

Nationalists greeted the decision with cries of treason and betrayal: and so popular did the cry become, that repudiation of the agreement was demanded. Had the Ministry stood firm, it is at least possible that the storm would have blown over. But unfortunately, with the concurrence of the Consul-General, it was decided to refer the question to the General Assembly. It must be supposed that Ministers had overestimated their influence with that body, and that Gorst had misjudged the level of statesmanship to which it had attained. It was a curious mistake for one whose residence in the East had extended over so many years. During the two decades which have elapsed since then, evolution has been more rapid than ever before, but it would still be quite impossible to find any representative body of men in any Eastern country with the courage to resist so loud an expression of public opinion, however unjustifiable it might be.

Whatever the cause of the error, it was made. When the decision of the Ministers was put to the vote of the Assembly, only one member was found to support it. The crisis had come, and its arrival was speedily and terribly signalised. At one o'clock in the afternoon of February 10, 1910, Boutros Pasha Ghali was assassinated as he was standing on the pavement outside his office, about to enter his carriage.

## CHAPTER VII

### GORST'S PREMATURE DEATH: HIS WORK REVIEWED

THE news of the assassination was brought to Gorst as he was riding in the open country. Those who were with him did not hear the message that was given to him, nor did they learn from his own lips what had happened, for he immediately put spurs to his horse and galloped off to return to Cairo. But they knew beyond possibility of doubt, from his expression and demeanour, that he had received a shattering blow.

During the same days that this dastardly political crime was being planned, Gorst was occupying many of his official hours in drafting his annual report on the state of the country. He completed it in a mood of optimism and recounted many symptoms from which encouragement might be drawn for the future. He found reason to write that "the Nationalist party was slowly but surely losing ground, effervescence in the schools was abating, and the students appeared to be once more occupied with their lessons": and he recorded his conclusion that although the members of the Legislative Council had been over-sensitive to Nationalist calumnies, they had been careful and reasonable in their discussion and amendment of important measures.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, March 26, 1910.

He had every right to hope for the appearance of these symptoms: they were, after all, due to him from Egypt for the attentive sympathy with which he had endeavoured to meet every aspiration expressed by her. Even now he was drawing a picture of her widespread reasonableness and her capacity for broad-minded statesmanship, which would do much to silence her detractors. The picture was not rendered more convincing by the brutal murder which was Egypt's swift answer to his efforts. There seems little doubt that the crime was purely political: the assassin, Ibrahim Nassif el-Wardani, was a young Egyptian, possessing just the kind of character so certain to be influenced by the unrestrained appeals to national and religious emotion which were issuing in a stream from the vernacular Press. Utterly unprincipled in their choice of weapons, the writers were only concerned to stir up the people to discontent by any means they could find. For general consumption the two most popular and effective subjects had been "The atrocity of Denshawai" and "Our religion in danger": while to articles upon "The theft of the Sudan" and "Upon the national betrayal to the Canal shareholders" a smaller but more select public had responded most satisfactorily.

It happened, as recorded above, that the murdered Prime Minister was a Christian, and had been President of the special Court which tried the Denshawai prisoners. It happened also that it was he who, as Foreign Minister, had signed the Sudan Convention, and finally it was his Cabinet which had recently accepted the Suez Canal Company's proposals. He was the target upon which all this fanatical abuse, and all the fierce emotions which it fanned, inevitably concentrated. Nor could it be said that violence had not

been openly advocated in the Press, for so lately as January 1910 an article had appeared in the *Kotr-el-Misr*, an Arabic newspaper, containing unmistakable incitements to assassination.<sup>1</sup> Yet, in spite of all these warnings, the authorities appear to have persuaded themselves that things would right themselves. Gorst certainly committed himself definitely to that opinion, and proclaimed his belief that the danger to the future, and to the success of the experiment he had initiated, would come, not from Egyptian sources, but from the attitude of that section of British opinion, official and non-official, which was hostile to his policy and did not believe that Egypt was as yet ripe for advance. But while he was answering these critics, and singing the praises of Egypt's political wisdom, he was stabbed in the back by the very people whose cause he was championing.

Police investigation into the crime revealed a widespread conspiracy and the existence of a secret terrorist society.<sup>2</sup> Religious fanaticism was raised to an alarming pitch. In Cairo crowds paraded the streets chanting the praises of the murderer:

"Wardani! Wardani!  
Who killed the Nasrani!"

<sup>1</sup> After citing the examples of rulers who deserved assassination at the hands of their people, the article sought to show that rulers, just as ordinary mortals, are capable of bringing happiness or disaster to their countries, and that some of them meet with an evil fate at an appointed day and hour. It concludes: "Par un curieux hasard il arrive que si un tel souverain néfaste meurt, est détrôné ou tué par le peuple, comme cela est arrivé à Saouïl, à Charles I d'Angleterre, à Louis XVI de France, l'état du peuple change du malheur au bonheur, de la pauvreté à la richesse, de la misère à la prospérité et cela par le fait d'une force occulte que la raison de l'homme ne parvient pas à pénétrer."

<sup>2</sup> It was proved, as the result of seizure of documents at the house and shop of the murderer, that he belonged to a secret society by name the Tadaman Society. A complete list of its members was discovered, amongst which two names figured prominently, those of Ali Menad and Shafik Mansur, the latter of whom we shall hear of again in connection with the assassination of the Sirdar, Sir Lee Stack, in 1924.

Those Christians, Egyptian and European, to whose ears the echoes reached, had good reason to shudder as they listened. The situation indeed appeared critical, for Nationalist agitation was redoubling its violence and the day could not long be postponed when Wardani must be brought to trial. The European and Coptic newspapers did not seek to hide the alarm which was generally felt in their communities and urgently demanded measures of security. The Government, however, did not consider it necessary to proceed to very drastic action. They ordered the suppression of several of the more violent newspapers and pamphlets, but they were right in concluding that the danger was not now imminent, for Wardani was tried and sentenced to death in May, and the trial passed off without serious incident.

Gorst was also very seriously considering the advisability of deporting Sheikh Shawish, who was undoubtedly taking a pre-eminent share in fomenting the agitation,<sup>1</sup> and he finally recommended this step. The recommendation was, however, coldly received by the Foreign Office and was allowed to drop.<sup>2</sup> Sheikh Shawish was now editing *Al Shaab*, but his activities were fortunately, if only temporarily, terminated in August, when a sentence of three months' imprisonment was passed upon him by the Courts for writing a preface to a seditious publication.

Meanwhile it was necessary to reconstruct the Cabinet, and it is instructive to read that Mohamed Said Pasha became Prime Minister in the place of the murdered Copt.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Sir E. Gorst to Sir E. Grey, May 14, 1910.

<sup>2</sup> F.O. Despatches: Sir E. Gorst to Sir E. Grey, May 14 and 20, 1910; Sir E. Grey to Sir E. Gorst, May 21, 1910.



A man of no particular family, Mohamed Said was a characteristic product of what may be called French Ottoman education. The result in his, as in so many other cases, was a capable lawyer, ambitious, and with a bent for politics; a man without any ideals to guide him, having every ruse at his command, and no scruples about employing any one of them. An illustration of these characteristics will be found in the following anecdote. He was attending one day a meeting of the Cabinet, at which there came up for discussion the question of whether a lawbreaker of some political importance should be set at large. At the moment when it fell to Mohamed Said's turn to speak upon this question, the door of the ante-chamber happened to open and he was overheard to deliver, in tones that were rich with the gravity and decorum of ministerial utterance, the following remarkable opinion: "Il faut le relâcher. C'est un homme sans scrupule, il nous sera utile." Personally, he was possessed of a kindly nature, and much courtesy of manner. He took a great risk when he gave himself to the service of the Khedive, and although he must have known only too well the hazards involved, he devoted himself very loyally to that service.

At the same time that Mohamed Said became Prime Minister, Saad Zaghlul was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Justice. Unlike his new chief, Zaghlul had always been hostile to the Khedive, and it was inevitable that before long he should come to an open breach with him. His tenure of office did not, in fact, last long.

It was becoming essential at this point to get the question of the Press Law cleared up finally. It might quite reasonably have been thought that in the alarmed state of feeling now prevalent among the

foreign communities, European Governments would have found compelling reason to assist the Egyptian Government in arriving at an early solution. But France and Germany still held to their objections. They would not agree that the Press Law of 1881 could lawfully be applied to their nationals: the German Government, however, were inclined to admit that the old Turkish Law of 1865 might be passed as of legal application. In order to secure some immediate solution, Egypt therefore now suggested that the French and German Governments might authorise their representatives to assist in applying the 1865 law to their respective nationals, at any rate until final agreement should be reached in regard to the law of 1881. The history of this question was in fact a forceful example of the grotesquely embarrassing situations to which the capitulations were liable to give rise. Egypt was advancing towards a greater measure of political freedom, and in such a period of transition it was clearly necessary that safeguards should be provided against the inherent risks; but the capitulations, although their whole *raison d'être* was to furnish such safeguards, were now operating to obstruct them. Nothing could have been more paradoxical and nothing could have shown more clearly that in their existing form they were entirely out of date, and that some other more workable machinery must be substituted for them. If nothing further could be speedily achieved, it was at any rate essential that as soon as possible some step should be taken to secure that proposals for legislation affecting foreigners in Egypt should cease to be the subject of diplomatic negotiation, and should be debated in future in some atmosphere where the practical needs of the Egyptian situation would not be en-

tirely disregarded. The Government now began at once to press forward proposals designed to secure this object, and they were again stimulated towards the end of the year by the case of the *Balagh-El-Misri* newspaper. This journal appeared under a Spanish director, but just when the Egyptian Government, having decided upon its suppression, had secured the co-operation of the Spanish authorities, the direction was transferred to a French subject. The French Government was still holding out over the practical application of the Press Law, and it appeared that the ends of government would be again frustrated. The difficulty was only overcome by the seizing of copies of the paper as they were printed, and by the unofficial efforts of the French Consul-General, who persuaded the French Director at last to withdraw from the venture.

Before the year closed the Nationalist Party received dubious encouragement from two widely separated sources. Mr. Keir Hardie and other English Socialists gave the support of their presence at the opening session of the "Egyptian National Congress" which was held at Brussels in September. And in October they received the favourable attention of the Young Turk Party. They had met with an apparently discouraging rebuff in the previous autumn, when the Grand Vizier, in an interview given to the *Temps* correspondent at Constantinople, declared: "We have no relations with the Egyptian Nationalist Party and we do not desire to have any. The Egyptian situation is good as it is." But by October 1910 it was made apparent that these words were not to their address, but intended for European consumers. In fact, it is more than probable that, although the new Government of Turkey

did not wish the Egyptian situation to be brought to a crisis until it had fully established itself at home and in its European relations, yet it did not lose sight of the possibility of again securing control over Egypt. For this wider purpose it did not scruple to express a secret sympathy with Egyptian Nationalists, and it also was careful to keep the spark of Pan-Islamism alive, although not yet prepared to fan it into flame.

Meanwhile the relations between Moslem and Copt were sadly damaging the popularity of the Party. The violence of their religious fanaticism had had its inevitable reaction, so that the sober-minded and those who had material interests to consider were withdrawing their support. The dispute began to tail off into a wrangle about Government appointments and special representation. The Copts presented a list of grievances which had little existence in fact. Meeting with small sympathy from the Residency and the British officials, they became stubborn and held a congress in the spring of 1911 at Assiut. The Moslems would have done better to sit still and let the matter die of inanition, but they had not sufficient self-control. They held a counter-congress in Cairo, the underlying bitterness of which was, fortunately, held in check by good organisation and the presiding personality of Riaz Pasha. The hostility did not immediately disappear, but reason had returned sufficiently for efforts at reconciliation to be begun. In fact, Gorst was able shortly afterwards to report that the agitation was settling down, and the widespread fever subsiding.<sup>1</sup>

The administration was also encouraged by securing the agreement of the Powers to a very important

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Sir E. Gorst to Sir E. Grey, March 18, 1911.

and beneficial change in respect of legislation. Article 12 of the Mixed Civil Code was modified, and a new Legislative Assembly was established with power to enact legislation which would apply to foreigners in regard to matters of civil dispute. This Assembly was to be composed of the General Assembly of the Mixed Courts of Appeal, with the addition of a Sessions Judge representing each Treaty Power not already represented by a Counsellor of the Court. The Procureur-Général of the Court of Appeal was to sit in the new Assembly and advocate the measures introduced by Government. Decisions required the assent of a two-thirds majority of those present. Government alone could introduce measures, but the Assembly was empowered to make suggestions to the Ministry of Justice. Laws approved by the Assembly could not be promulgated for three months, and any Power might in the interval demand that the law in question should be re-submitted for further discussion by the Assembly. This was a very important step gained, and of great advantage to the Egyptian Government. But Gorst was not content to rest there, and was already at work upon a scheme for the total abolition of the Capitulations, work which was, however, destined to be cut short within a few months by the tragic close of his life. He was grievously ill when he returned to England for his annual holiday in the summer, and he died there on July 10, 1911.

His death was a great loss to Egypt and to England. Whatever may have been the defects of the policy which he initiated, it was clearly vital to its success that the brain which initiated the scheme should carry it through. But with this proviso, it would not be unfair to point out that the programme

which he commenced contained certain obvious weaknesses. It was, in the first place, an attempt to mix two elements which could not in their nature coalesce. On the one hand it was logically possible to select and apply a policy of training a native bureaucracy to work under native ministers, and so of establishing an autocracy designed to be more stable and progressive than in the past, or on the other it was possible to adopt a democratic policy and to lay the foundation of representative institutions. But it was not possible to do both these things at once. If representative institutions were to be successfully fostered, the only hope of achieving this lay in restraining with a firm hand the political activities of the Khedive and of the autocracy which he represented: but if autocracy—a strengthened and improved autocracy—was to remain the constitution of Egypt, it was misleading and purposeless to encourage representative institutions. Yet Gorst attempted both, and the temptation is very strong to find the reason for this in unenlightened instructions coming from elsewhere out of a surplus of uninstructed sentimentalism. The lack of comprehension and of definition, accompanied as it is by symptoms of misdirected goodwill, must be taken as strong presumptive evidence of the intervention of a British administration. The keen desire to cultivate democracy at random and regardless of the suitability of the soil only serves to corroborate this view. The result was merely a diminution in the strength of governmental authority, with the inevitable consequence of lawless unrest.

It is not, however, entirely fair to Gorst and to his policy to judge them only upon the results achieved between 1908 and his death. It has to be remembered first of all that these years were years of an economic

depression which was not of his making, which his own financial ability would have done much to alleviate. Economic difficulties do not mitigate political unrest, and although Gorst cannot be absolved from the blame of choosing such a moment for political excursions, yet it is very probable that some of the unrest which was put down to his activities was in reality due to economic causes. It must also be remembered that the period of his rule was very short, and that in laying his plans he was looking farther ahead than destiny in fact permitted. His later policy would assuredly have been guided by the results of his experiment in its early years, and in the light of those results he himself would have proceeded to alter course or amend methods. Already in his annual report for 1910, written in the early months of 1911, we can read certain conclusions which point to a definite change in his ideas. He comes indeed very close to admitting that the experiment has proved a failure. "It cannot be denied", he writes, "that the recent experiment has, so far as the Legislative Council and General Assembly are concerned, proved a failure, and that the results derived from it have not been in accordance with our intentions or hopes."<sup>1</sup> The reason he finds is that the idea has been generally accepted both by Egyptians and by local Europeans that recent policy has been due to weakness. "We have to make Egyptians understand that His Majesty's Government do not intend to allow themselves to be hustled into going farther or faster in the direction of self-government than they consider to be in the interests of the Egyptian people as a whole."<sup>2</sup> This was very different language from that which he had used only a year before when he was assuring the

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, March 25, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, March 25, 1911.

Foreign Office that the chief obstacle to success was the adverse criticism of English elements, and urging upon British officials the duty of patience and self-effacement. With equal outspokenness he now condemned the Legislative Council, whose conduct he was ready a year before to palliate and excuse. "The policy of ruling this country in co-operation with Native Ministers is at the present time incompatible with that of encouraging the development of so-called representative institutions. The Ministers are chosen from amongst the most capable Egyptians and are better acquainted with the real desires and opinions of their countrymen than the members of the Council, who in reality represent nothing but the class of wealthy Beys and Pashas."

Finally we may quote his general conclusion that "institutions really representative of the people are obviously impossible in a country in which, out of a population of over eleven millions, only 600,000 can read and write".<sup>1</sup>

One other important change in the tendency of his administration was also impending, if we may believe Lord Cromer.<sup>2</sup> "I have a strong conviction, based on conversations which I held with Sir Eldon Gorst shortly before his tragically premature death, that his honeymoon with the Khedive—which is a very common episode when Englishmen are first brought into close contact with Orientals of the type of Abbas II.—was approaching its close."

To Cromer and to other experienced observers also the most convenient conclusion was that the real responsibility for the failure of Gorst's experiment must be laid upon the Khedive. But it must be remembered that to many of such observers the demo-

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, March 25, 1911.

<sup>2</sup> *Abbas II.*, Preface, p. xiii.



cratic principle was sacred. It was an article of their faith and they could not admit that there existed any country or any people which would not be the better for its introduction. When the application of one of the principal tenets of their democratic faith met with failure instead of success, it was perhaps only human that they should look at once for a scapegoat, and it must be admitted that the Khedive was finely equipped for the part. But now that, in the light of the experience of the last twenty years, the ardour of that faith has somewhat abated, we are realising that there are real difficulties inherent in the application of democracy, apart entirely from the personalities of the protagonists. The spectacle of the countries to which we were acting *in loco parentis* during the last century now struggling with the discomfort and inconvenience of suits of clothes which do not fit them, is one which is distinctly painful for us to witness.

If Gorst made a serious mistake in attempting the task of buttoning a growing boy into a ready-made suit that did not fit, he at least began the task on the right lines. The only hope of success lies in gently easing the child into the sleeves and trouser-legs. The Provincial Councils which Gorst inaugurated were at least a sensible attempt to begin at the beginning of the task, and the attempt was fairly justified by results. The Councils showed a keen interest in their work, and an encouraging readiness to shoulder responsibility. In education they showed especial promise. The seed of self-government was planted in the most favourable soil, and, given a series of mild seasons, might well have borne good fruit.

His tactics alike in regard to the Khedive, the British officials, and the Legislative Council are more

vulnerable to criticism. His policy in relation to the first-named is indeed very difficult to defend: its conception was ill-founded and its results damaging. But none the less it must be remembered that Gorst himself honestly believed at first that it would be possible to turn and curb Abbas, and also that his policy towards him did have one undoubted advantage, in that it broke up the alliance between Abbas and the Nationalist Party—an alliance which was becoming a serious menace. It is clear also that we do not know the whole story: the later pages are missing and we can only conjecture their contents. In these two directions he had certainly not gone too far to withdraw and to make radical alterations such as his successor was soon to make. Did he regard his line of action here as doomed to failure but as a step which had to be taken to ensure the success of his whole scheme? It is arguable that this was the case, and so high an authority as Cromer has written in this connection: "Nothing short of an actual experiment would have convinced the Egyptian public and the extreme English sympathisers with Egyptian aspirations that . . . a sudden change from tutelage to almost complete independence could not be effected without a serious dislocation of the whole political and administrative machinery". But there is no practical value in proceeding to further conjectural speculations upon this point: and it is more worth while to turn to consideration of the views actually held at the time in regard to Gorst's activities. In 1909 Mustapha Pasha Fehmy, Prime Minister of Egypt for so many years in Cromer's régime, was residing in Constantinople, and there is on record an expression of his view at that time that British policy was lacking in uniformity, there being too much

alternation between weakness and severity. Finally, he said, "*Le Khedive est toujours très hostile et il ne changera plus*".<sup>1</sup> Here was striking confirmation from the lips of an experienced Oriental politician of the views to which Gorst appeared to be strongly inclining when he died. Another supremely interesting reflection is that Gorst never succeeded in convincing the majority of the British officials serving in Egypt of the wisdom of his plans. There is little doubt that they remained unenthusiastic and in many cases very hostile, and the reason is probably to be found not in his policy alone, or in his personality alone, but in a mixture of the two.

Although they might reasonably have doubted the wisdom of the policy, or at any rate of applying it at this time, there can be little doubt that had they been impressed with Gorst's power of leadership, or his capacity to inspire and at the same time control, they would have surrendered their doubts and supported him whole-heartedly. What was the defect in him that caused this failure in a vitally important direction? He had ample store of moral courage, of intelligence, and of practical ability. His ideals were finely conceived, and well stated. "British policy in Egypt", he wrote, "in no way differs from that followed by Great Britain all over the world towards countries under her influence, namely, to place before all else the welfare of their populations." With an insight and nobility that has seldom been improved upon, he defined also the qualities needed in British officials serving in the administration of Oriental countries. "Success depends upon the possession of tact, the power of self-effacement and unlimited patience." He realised that a vocation is as necessary in this

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Mr. Bax-Ironside to Sir E. Grey, August 11, 1909.

service as in any other cure of souls. But in a Consul-General, who was *de facto* the head of a great Oriental administration, something more is needed. Qualities which make the perfect civil servant will not supply all that is needed in a leader of men: and Gorst had been a successful civil servant for many years before he became the head of an administration. Had his destiny kept him a civil servant to the end, he would certainly have risen to the highest posts that such service can offer and filled them with distinction. In another and much more responsible position he failed to fulfil the expectations that were held of him, because it seems that he did not possess the quality of leadership in its highest form. Without that quality no one could have made a success of a task of such immense difficulty as the one to which he set his hand. What might have happened had death not cut short his period of office, it is useless to speculate. As it was, Egypt was left with her feet unsteadily planted upon a path full of snares and pitfalls. But the Ottoman world, and thereafter the whole world, was now about to be convulsed, and the convulsion was to claim the attention of all concerned with Egypt, while her own destiny marched forward almost unperceived.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUDAN, 1904-1908

It may have caused some surprise that throughout the earlier chapters of this book references to the Sudan have been so infrequent. However close may be the connection between Egypt and that territory, the fact remains that since 1899 their respective histories had been developing on lines entirely separated.

Owing to Cromer's firm determination, the Sudan administration had been able to set out upon its work without any embarrassing legacies from the past. Writing in later years of the settlement made after Omdurman, Cromer gives a very clear summary of the considerations upon which that settlement was based.<sup>1</sup> The facts, he says, were plain enough. "Fifteen years previously Egyptian misgovernment had led to a successful rebellion in the Sudan. British rule had developed the military and financial resources of Egypt to such an extent as to justify the adoption of a policy of reconquest. But England, not Egypt, had in reality reconquered the country. It is true that the Egyptian treasury had borne the greater portion of the cost, and that Egyptian troops, officered however by Englishmen, had taken a very honourable

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt*, chap. xxxiii.

part in the campaign. But alike during the period of the preparation and of the execution of the policy, the guiding hand had been that of England. It is absurd to suppose that without British assistance in the form of men, money, and general guidance, the Egyptian Government could have reconquered the Sudan." Annexation of the Sudan he regarded as impossible, because it would have been unjust to the share Egypt had taken in the reconquest. On the other hand, to put the Sudan in the same position as Egypt by merely adding it to the territory governed by the Khedive would have been to saddle the new administration with the dreadful burden of Capitulations, Mixed Tribunals, Consular Courts—a burden quite intolerable in so backward a country.

The solution of the difficulty was sought in an Anglo-Egyptian condominium. Of the Agreement signed by Cromer and the ill-fated Boutros Pasha Ghali, on January 19, 1899, the first effect was to do away, for practical purposes, with Turkish suzerainty, and therefore with all international privileges current in Ottoman territory. "The claims which have accrued to H.B.M.'s Government, by right of conquest, to share in the present settlement and future working and development" of the Sudan administration were recognised in the Preamble. The introduction of Great Britain as a Power having recognised rights over the Sudan, though nominally leaving Turkish suzerainty in existence, removed all its practical concomitants. For the rest, the Governor-General of the Sudan was to be appointed by Khedivial Decree on the recommendation of the British Government, and to be removed only with its consent, and his proclamations were to have the force of law. Moreover, no foreign Consuls were to

be allowed to reside in the country without the previous consent of the British Government.

The Sudan ship of state was to be officered by British, even if the warrant officers were Egyptians, and it is to be remembered that in those early years the horrors of the Sudan lay so heavily on the Egyptian mind that the recruiting of the warrant officers and their incredibly poor quality, mental and moral, was one of the great difficulties of the Sudan Government.

"Ah, Monsieur, vous avez beaucoup de courage", said an Egyptian Minister to a young Englishman going to Khartoum for the first time, and that attitude made it easily possible for Egyptian Ministers to consent to a convention which in practice and in the natural course of development has prevented effective interference by Egypt in the government of the Sudan, and permitted it to be administered much as if it were a British colony. Cromer's informed and patient wisdom stood always, in the early years, behind the scenes, and this was an asset which would have proved invaluable to any colony and to many Secretaries of State.

If Cromer or the British Government had had a deep-seated desire to deprive Egypt of her first claims they would have acted otherwise, but Cromer was not deeply concerned with the theoretical constitutional questions. What he was concerned with was that never again should the peaceful development of Egypt be retarded by the threat of invasion from the south, that the waters of the Nile should be protected and utilised to their full extent, and on the other hand that never again should the Egyptian official, the Egyptian money-lender, the Egyptian slave-dealer grow fat on the miseries of the Sudan.

But if the practical result was clear, the legal and constitutional consequences were wrapped in the deepest mystery. Cromer himself admits that the political status created by his Sudan policy was not capable of precise definition. He and his generation liked it all the better for that. It was accepted at the time, as he convincingly points out, first, because the British Government were clearly not aiming at any injustice to anybody; second, because the attitude of that Government was firm and determined. It is the second reason that is important. In it is comprised at once the strength and the weakness of our position. For clearly, so long as our intention was unmistakable to carry out our plans, it would have been practically useless as well as inexpedient for anyone to protest. But equally clearly, if ever our conviction began to waver or our policy became uncertain, then we should be in a very difficult position. We should have to depend upon legal arguments in regard to a status which, from the legal point of view, was admittedly to the last degree obscure.

All the preceding paragraphs digress, it must be admitted, far outside the chronological limits of the present book. They seem to be justified, however, not only because of the especial interest which attaches at present to their subject, but also because some such digression appears to be an essential preface to the Sudanese history with which we are concerned.

The Governor-General of the Sudan was given, as we have seen, a clean slate upon which to write. The territory which he was now to administer, according to his own almost unfettered will, was roughly 950,000 square miles in extent, of which only about 1576 square miles were cultivated, even in 1906. The rest of his domain consisted, in Cromer's words, of



“desert swamp and primaeval forest”. This vast area was sparsely inhabited by something under two million people, whose degree of civilisation ranged from nothing to a very little above that figure. They had for many years been the defenceless prey of the Arab slave-traders, while inter-tribal wars and the ravages of disease had been steadily exterminating those who escaped slavery.

Beginning, as it were, from zero, the new administration had by the year 1908 achieved very much. Slavery was being steadily repressed. The revenue collected in that year amounted to £804,000, while in 1898 it was only £35,000. The personnel of the administration had done much to gain the confidence and respect of the inhabitants; the Nile valley had been connected by rail with Port Sudan on the Red Sea; and the cultivated area was steadily increasing. The Sudan had, in fact, embarked upon a career of its own, a career which even in such early infancy was already showing promise. But however independent its life might be, there were two facts which were to constitute strong ties between it and Egypt. The first was inevitably imposed by geographical circumstance. From the Sudan came the water of the Nile which was the life-blood of Egypt. Therefore it was essential to the latter's security that no use should be made of that water in the Sudan which did not give due consideration to the needs of Egypt. It was also of great importance to the Sudan that it should be assured of a free use of communications to the Mediterranean ports.

The second tie was one not inevitably imposed, but permitted to grow till it attained considerable strength. During the early years of its life, the Sudan had not anything like adequate financial resources to

maintain itself and develop. Under the condominium it was clearly not inevitable that Egypt should make up the deficiency, but it was natural enough that the task should devolve upon her in view of the grave economic importance to her of the stability of the new administration. And in fact she not only made up the annual deficiency out of her own resources, but also supplied on loan all the capital that that country required for development. It was not until 1908 that the Sudan Government was to begin to pay any interest on the  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions of capital which had been advanced to her, and inclusive of that interest the charge which the Egyptian Treasury had to bear on account of the Sudan amounted in 1906 to £E130,000. The amount in itself was not great, but in the years immediately before and after 1906 it was the cause of a great deal of difficulty and friction in Egypt. The Nationalist Party, in their attacks upon the British Occupation, made great use of the Sudan administration. Their contention was that Great Britain had robbed Egypt of her birth-right in the Sudan, and that until that wrong was righted it was the duty of patriotic Egyptians to refuse supplies for that country. At the time when anti-British agitation was achieving its greatest success during Gorst's tenure of office, the Legislative Council was much affected by this propaganda in regard to the Sudan, and there was always a great deal of difficulty and friction in regard to the Sudan vote; indeed one of the chief causes of attack upon Boutros Pasha, the murdered Prime Minister, was that as Foreign Minister in 1899 he had signed the Sudan Convention.

There was, in truth, very little ground for the angry complaints which were made. It was essential

to the prosperity of Egypt that there should be set up around the headwaters of the Nile a stable administration, under which the inhabitants of that much harassed country would turn at last to peaceful pursuits and the development of their material resources. In 1899 it was unthinkable that a purely or even a largely Egyptian administration could have achieved this. The people of the Sudan had risen in successful revolt not many years before against Egyptian domination. The memory of the oppression and misrule from which they had then suffered was fresh in their minds, and equally fresh was the memory of the crushing victories they had inflicted upon Egyptian arms. They would never have settled down under an administration controlled by Egypt or manned to any influential extent by Egyptians.

That Egypt, not controlling the administration, should have, nevertheless, to pay for it, might at first sight appear unjust. But in point of fact the transaction was a profitable one to her, even on strictly business lines. She was making a comparatively small annual payment for very large benefits accruing. She had secured the permanent safety of her water supply and the great advantage that that supply was now entirely in the hands of herself and a Power friendly to herself. In these circumstances it could at last be developed fully and to the best advantage of her own interests. Furthermore, it must be remembered that the capital she was lending to the Sudan would develop that country's resources so that it would shortly be financially independent. Thus payments from Egypt would soon be no longer required, and at the same time she would begin to receive interest on the capital sum she had advanced. The Sudan administration had, of course, a fairly long and difficult road to

travel before it could arrive at such a stage. For many years the greater part of its energies was directed to maintaining law and order. Peace and a firm government capable of inspiring confidence and respect were what the country required in its convalescent stages. More active development would follow later and inevitably, if this essential were supplied. But there were plenty of external demands upon the resource and courage of the administration distracting attention from internal tasks.

The southern boundary had been left undefined in 1899, and it was not very long before King Leopold of Belgium was advancing to the north the claims of his Congo Estate. Thousands of miles away from their headquarters, having had no time to acquaint themselves fully with the territories they administered, and hampered by an entire absence of civilised means of communication, the officers of the Sudan administration played, month after month, a friendly, patient, and finally successful game of bluff with the Belgian officers from the Congo.

In fact, the Sudan was now entering upon a stage of steady progress, which was hardly to be interrupted by external happenings until August 1914. With the exception of a period of tension in 1909 on the western frontiers of Kordofan, her relations with her neighbours remained such as to allow the Government to concentrate all their attention upon internal development. The southern frontier had ceased to be a question at issue, the western frontier had not yet become one, relations with Abyssinia and Eritrea were entirely friendly, and the interior was now connected with the sea at Port Sudan, where a modern harbour and quays were in process of construction. Freed from the danger of serious trespass over their

frontiers, freed also from the more imminent, and to them possibly more dreadful, danger of interference from Whitehall, Sir Reginald Wingate and his subordinates were left to win the confidence of the inhabitants of a vast territory and to develop its resources.

The country with which they had to deal presented much geographical variation, and an ethnological mixture that was little short of bewildering. The arid and stony deserts of the northern territory hardly prepare the traveller for the hills and the swamps of the south. The two hundred tribes of the Sudan with their Babel of different dialects are separated from one another by an infinite variety of speech, custom, and racial characteristic. The simple classification into Arab, Negroid, and Black—useful as it is to the layman—hardly touches the problem which daily presents itself to the administrator on the spot. It will suffice, however, for our purpose, to recall that the pure Arab is, from many points of view, the aristocrat of the Sudan. The term Arab is honorific, and tribes which are largely negroid in origin are constantly aspiring to be called Arab, and supporting their claim with genealogical tables which they do not find it difficult to procure. To this consideration must be joined the kindred fact that the predominant religion throughout the most important part of the Sudan is the religion of Islam, and that its influence and the number of its followers are steadily increasing. The faith, in its journeyings and conflicts throughout this diversified region, has tended, however, to become far less rigid and more mystical. Cut off by geographical barriers from close intercourse with the scholastic centres of orthodoxy, having to suit itself to life in a wild and uncivilised country, its vitality has expressed itself in the apocalyptic doc-

trines of Mahdiism. The struggle between good and evil was finally to be settled by the appearance of a great religious leader, the forerunner of the return of the prophet Jesus, who would finally lead the forces of good to victory over antichrist. It was the development of this religious tendency which led to the revolt and the success of the Mahdi; the movement, though fed by oppression and misgovernment, was not essentially political, but the outcome of a wave of mystical fanaticism to which the Mahomedan population of the Sudan is at all times prone, and to which they will respond much more certainly than to any secular call to rebellion.

Over this congeries of tribes Mahdiism had swept like a fire, and they had emerged from the ordeal at the lowest possible level of livelihood and civilisation. At the time when this history commences, much had been done by way of restoration, and a cursory glance at the annual administration report for 1907 will afford some indication of the level which had been reached, of the needs which were still urgent, and of the difficulties which remained.

The report begins with the following paragraph: "The retirement of the Belgian troops from the south-western districts of the Bahr-el-Ghazal, the settlement of the frontiers of Abyssinia and Uganda, and a more definite understanding with Sultan Ali Dinar as regards the Darfour frontier, have diminished the various external difficulties confronting the Government of the Sudan". So much for the state of the frontiers. As to the internal condition of the provinces we are provided with some illuminating glimpses. In the Bahr-el-Ghazal province we learn that "money is gradually taking the place of beads". In Kordofan the standard of civilisation appears

higher, but not by local accounts very deeply ingrained. The Governor of this province reports that "the great grievance with all Arabs is want of slaves, which is increasing now that every black man can claim his freedom as a right without compensation to his owner. They also find peace when continued year after year rather a bore than otherwise." In Mongalla "the most important feature of the past season's work has been the assessment and collection of a tribute in kind from the tribes who are nearest government posts, and who have derived benefit from the pacification of the country, and the control now exercised. This collection was approved, not in the hope of obtaining any great return in the way of revenue, but more in order that the fact of these tribes paying a contribution should practically demonstrate, according to native ideas, their acknowledgment of being under government." In the south and south-west it appears that the work of introducing civilised ideas had made a definite beginning, but if they were to take real hold upon a population to which they were so utterly foreign, infinite patience, sympathy, and restraint would be needed by the officers of government. Captain Cameron in Mongalla reports another difficulty which appears to have been common enough. "Short of putting a man to work under the eye of a policeman, there seems to be no way of getting regular steady work out of any of these people." Although to the north and north-east, nearer to the Egyptian border and the Red Sea, a higher standard of civilisation obtained, there were still great difficulties to contend with; a population which had been so terribly reduced by years of anarchy and misrule, of which many tribes evinced a strong disinclination to work, could not supply the labour needed for any rapid

material development. Khartoum was drawing the able-bodied to it and there was danger that cultivation would be neglected. The problems here were as urgent in degree as they were different in kind. While the administration of Upper Nile Province had spent the year 1907 in overcoming "the difficulties inherent in inducing the Nuers to communicate with Government", the administration of Khartoum was struggling with educational problems and discovering that while a technical education as blacksmith or carpenter was acceptable to the people, stone-cutting was considered "a work only fit for slaves".

Finally, in order that we may be reminded of the immense difficulties of climate, communication, and supply which attended all administrative effort, there is the story of the loss of the Bir Natron post. The story is sufficiently dramatic to be quoted in full from the official report. Bir Natron was a small oasis in the desert 280 miles west of Dongola. The tribes who visited it during the dry winter months were prone to fight with one another, and in order to prevent this it was decided to establish there a military post of one officer and forty N.C.O.'s and men of the Camel Corps. The convoy which was to bring them their first instalment of supplies lost its way in the desert, and though it was due to arrive on the 7th April 1907, on the 14th it was still 110 miles from its destination. "Meanwhile", runs the official report, "the officer in command at Bir Natron, fearing to run short of supplies, and acting in accordance with his instructions, evacuated the post on the 10th April, and started to march on Dongola, fully expecting to meet the food convoy *en route*. The party carried enough supplies to take them to Abu Tabari, a five



days' march, but on the fifth day they found themselves still in the waterless desert, and their remaining guide—the other having previously deserted—acknowledged that he had lost his way. Their supply of water ran out. The officer halted and sent out two scouting parties of four men each, north and south. The first of these came across the food convoy on the 15th April and returned with guides and water to where the detachment had been left. Here only eleven men, seven women and a child were found, all in a very exhausted condition, and from them it was ascertained that a few hours previously the officer, with those who were strong enough to move, had proceeded southwards to look for water. The tracks of this main party had, however, been obliterated by a heavy sandstorm, and all efforts to trace them were fruitless. The total of those who perished was one officer, twenty-one N.C.O.'s and men, and one woman. A special Court of Enquiry established that this sad occurrence, which I record with deep regret, was due to circumstances beyond human control. The post of Bir Natron was reoccupied on the 6th December."

Enough has perhaps now been written to give a general picture of the work to be done and the conditions in which it was to be attempted. *Mutatis mutandis* it was essentially the same work which we had undertaken in India and in Egypt, and had carried through with such conspicuous success, work particularly suited to the English administrative genius, work in which sympathy, strength, and self-restraint would be more important than diplomatic finesse or legal subtilty. Nothing need interfere with a single-minded pursuit of the prime object of our colonial administration, and the welfare of the people

in our charge. There was no consideration, international or political, to which that welfare need be at present in any way sacrificed. Such happy days of single-minded devotion to a practical ideal were now drawing to their close for the Egyptian administrator, but in the Sudan they were just beginning, and the contrast between the two histories is striking and melancholy. In the Sudan one year of steady progress was to follow another under the care and protection of British officials, while in Egypt at the same time much of the good work done by the British Occupation was to be either gradually or suddenly thrown away in the pursuit of Western political conceptions.

Sir Eldon Gorst, who was at this very time just entering upon the discouraging task of reconciling political aspirations with good administration in Egypt, concludes his first annual report upon the affairs of the Sudan with a paragraph in which a somewhat wistful note is at times discernible. He was an observer of considerable previous experience, and his conclusions are therefore of much interest and value. "At the commencement of 1908", he writes, "I returned to the Sudan after an interval of 7 years. . . . During my short stay I was able to see with my own eyes the immense advance not only in the material well-being of the population, but also in their moral and intellectual standard, that has taken place in these few years.

"At Port Sudan an arid desert has been transformed into a harbour provided with all the necessary equipment of the most modern description for facilitating commerce. . . .

"Throughout this journey two points of a general character were very noticeable: firstly, the good feeling and hearty co-operation existing among all the

officials of the Sudan Government, from the highest to the lowest, and the activity and enthusiasm displayed in the execution of their very arduous duties: and secondly, the hold which the Englishmen in that service have obtained over the heterogeneous peoples they are called upon to administer.

“In conclusion I have no hesitation in saying that His Majesty’s Government may feel entire confidence in the spirit in which these vast territories are at present administered, and they may be assured that the existing system is the one most calculated to promote the welfare of the inhabitants.”

## CHAPTER IX

### KITCHENER: HIS DIPLOMATIC AND POLITICAL ACTIVITIES

LIKE Sir Eldon Gorst, Kitchener, who succeeded him, had had during the earlier years of his career a close connection with Egypt, and had laid the foundations of his success in the Egyptian service. In 1892 he had been appointed Commander-in-Chief of the Egyptian Army, and had completed its reorganisation so successfully that under his command it took part in 1898 in the victory of Omdurman. That battle restored the prestige of Egyptian arms, broke the power of Mahdiism, and established the Anglo-Egyptian condominium in the Sudan. The name of the great Sirdar, victor of Omdurman, was therefore a name both loved and respected by Egyptians, and when he arrived in Cairo in September 1911 to take up the duties of Consul-General, he received a reception which astonished by its warmth and friendliness.

There was in all probability, however, one Egyptian who did not welcome his arrival. It is unlikely that the Khedive had forgotten the famous "frontier incident" of 1894, when at Wadi Halfa he had taken the opportunity of a public review of the troops wantonly to insult the army and particularly its

British officers. Lord Kitchener had refused to allow the matter to rest, and indeed had tendered his resignation, and the Khedive had been forced to make an official recantation and dismiss his Under-Secretary for War in favour of a nominee of the Sirdar's. For the time being, however, Kitchener was content to let bygones be bygones and to treat the Khedive with friendly courtesy.

Indeed, if it is true to say that Kitchener reversed the policy of Gorst, it is true in one sense only. He did not revoke any of the measures which Gorst had put in force. He did not even slacken the pace of constitutional reform, as the Organic Law of 1913 clearly shows. But whereas Gorst's main preoccupation had been to demonstrate British sympathy with Egyptian political aspirations, Kitchener naturally regarded political institutions as not in themselves admirable and in Eastern countries more than likely to be harmful. Tactical considerations might render it necessary to develop them, but they could not in his view ever be taken as the goal of a disinterested policy. His real opinion of them was that, at any rate in their Western form, they were sure to have a disastrous effect upon Oriental races. And he did not hesitate to express this view officially. "Party spirit", he wrote, "is to them (Oriental nations) like strong drink to uncivilised African natives."<sup>1</sup> And in his first annual review he described the serious deterioration which he discerned since his previous departure: it was a crime, he thought, to have introduced into a Moslem people with its ideals of fraternal equality, the seeds of faction and party.

On the other hand, he had a strong affection and regard for the fellaheen, who had formed the bulk of

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, 1912.

his command as Sirdar. He was bound to them alike by personal friendship and by the spirit of corporate loyalty. As between the politician and the peasant his choice was already made. "The future development of the vast mass of the inhabitants of Egypt depends upon improved conditions of agriculture, which, with educational progress, are the more essential steps towards material and moral advance of the people."<sup>1</sup> Holding these views it was certain that his policy would give prominence to administrative measures and relegate political reform again to the second place. To this extent it would be a reversal of Gorst's policy, and a return to the accepted ideas of Cromer's day.

But if his temperament differed from that of Gorst, it differed almost as largely from that of Cromer. Whatever were his unquestionable merits as a soldier, he had neither the intellectual ability nor the patience and breadth of vision to bring him up to Cromer's level of statesmanship. In regard to matters which really claimed his interest, he could take long—often inspired—views, but his interests were circumscribed and not, like Cromer's, wide as humanity's. His principal assets were a relentless tenacity of purpose and a forceful strength of personality, and these were qualities which at the present juncture were badly needed in the direction of Egyptian affairs.

For the time being internal affairs receded into the background, and their place was taken by developments in the Mediterranean situation arising out of the Morocco negotiations. In particular, it was being strongly rumoured in the Mahomedan world that, in the event of France and Germany arriving at a settlement in regard to Morocco, Italy would seriously

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, 1912.

contemplate the occupation of Tripoli. It was an opportunity, in fact, so tempting that the Italians finally cast other considerations to the winds and took it. France's hands were tied by the support which Italy had given her in regard to Morocco: Germany was Italy's ally and in view of her European position could not afford to let the alliance go. Italy had two pressing needs—to restore the balance of power in the Mediterranean which had been upset by France's recent acquisitions, and to secure an outlet for the surplus population of Southern Italy. Two days after Kitchener's arrival at Alexandria, it was clear that she did not intend to let her opportunity slip, and a state of war between Turkey and Italy broke out in Tripoli.

The outcome of the struggle would be of grave importance to the Ottoman Empire and to the Caliphate: and the Moslem world was at once seething with excitement and alarm. Egypt was on the high-road between the Turkish base and the scene of war: she was still technically a part of the Ottoman dominions: the situation in regard to her was, therefore, especially difficult, and Kitchener handled it with supreme success. It was decided that Egypt should maintain a strict neutrality, which would be guaranteed by Great Britain. In view of the natural sympathy of Egypt with the Ottoman cause, and the immense importance to Turkey of securing a land line of communications, the task of maintaining such neutrality was one of grave difficulty. It was a striking achievement that at the end of the war neither Italian friendship nor Egyptian susceptibilities had been in any way affronted.

The gravity of external anxieties did not prevent Kitchener from setting to work immediately upon

the schemes which he had at heart for the improvement of the lot of the fellaheen. In order to leave the field clear for them, he had first to dispose of certain current questions bequeathed to him as a legacy by the previous administration. The impatient haste with which Kitchener submitted his proposals in regard to them shows clearly that he took these matters to have a very secondary importance as compared with the schemes in which he was personally interested. But the fact remains that they were of serious importance to the destinies of Egypt, for they related to the Capitulations, and the Secretary of State was anxious to seize what seemed a favourable opportunity. If the Capitulations were to be removed from the path of Egyptian development, it could only be when the Capitulatory Powers were assured that some other machinery could be devised capable of protecting the interests of their nationals in Egypt. A step forward had been taken in this direction, as we have seen, by the delegation to an Assembly of foreign Judges of the Mixed Courts of the Powers' right to examine legislation applicable to foreigners. But the right of the Powers to veto such legislation remained, nor had any steps at all been taken in regard to the other capitulatory rights, the triple set of Courts and the variety of criminal codes which their existence necessitated. The British authorities had never, since the Occupation began, lost sight of the supreme desirability of doing away with these rights. But it was obvious that the Powers concerned would only agree to their removal if and when the internal administration of Egypt reached such a degree of honesty, efficiency, and tolerance that no especial safeguards were required. Clearly that day was not yet: but none the less, by means



of some curiously loose thinking, the authorities in London arrived at the conclusion that if France were about to ask for complete freedom of jurisdiction in Morocco, she would morally be bound to consent to the disappearance of the Capitulations in Egypt. In reality of course the analogy was false in important particulars. France was assuming complete responsibility for the administration in Morocco; the French Resident General would have constitutional power to reject or accept Shereefian decrees, and above all the French were not committed to ultimate withdrawal. The British could have made the analogy a true one by assuming the same position in Egypt, but only thereafter would it be valuable in negotiation.

If the occupying Power took over the supreme authority in Egypt, then a state of affairs would have arisen in which the Powers would have found it impossible to argue that their nationals' interests would be imperilled by the abrogation of the capitulatory rights. If such a step were not taken, then the same state of affairs would not arise until, with the slow lapse of time, the Egyptian nation had completely absorbed Western standards and improved its administration accordingly.

It was upon a puzzling mixture of these hypotheses that Kitchener framed his first proposals regarding the capitulatory situation. He proposed to modify it by abolishing the criminal competence of the Consular Courts, and by transferring all civil and criminal jurisdiction other than questions of personal status to the Mixed Courts. Foreigners charged with felony would then be tried by new Courts of Assize, consisting of three judges, two foreign and one native, and assisted by assessors. The assessors would be all of foreign nationality, if

the accused were a foreigner or foreigners, but in cases where natives and foreigners were charged with the same offence, they would be half of foreign and half of Egyptian nationality. In all cases of "misdemeanour" or of police offences in which a sentence of imprisonment was inflicted, foreigners would have the right of appeal to a foreign judge of the Court of Assize. Warrants of arrest against foreigners would be valid for four days only, and afterwards no detention would be legal without the authority of a foreign magistrate. He also proposed that the legislative and fiscal veto of the Powers should be handed over to Great Britain subject to certain undertakings, which would be enforceable in the Supreme Court. Such undertakings were to be in the form of a guarantee that foreigners should not be subject to a less favourable régime than natives of Egypt, and that the subjects of all nations should receive like treatment.

It is extremely difficult to discover any fixed and clearly thought out policy at the back of these proposals. Echoes of Cromer's plan for a fusion of races are perhaps discernible in the proposals for judicial reform. On the other hand, the basis of the legislative and fiscal proposal seems to have been a policy of indefinite British occupation. Cromer's plan had long ago been shelved because of its unpopularity not only with Egyptians but with foreigners, and in any case the immediate transference of the whole jurisdiction of the Consular Courts, however desirable in itself, was a change of such importance that it would have assuredly been wiser to work towards it by a more gradual series of proposals instead of endeavouring to achieve it in one hasty and gigantic stride. It would have been perfectly possible to take that stride if we had guaranteed the permanence of our Occupation: but

if the presence and influence of Great Britain were to be made the argument for ceding one set of capitulatory rights, it would be more logical to use the same argument in regard to all; more logical, therefore, to suggest, instead of a development of the Mixed Tribunals, an extension of the jurisdiction of the Native Courts under the supervision of Great Britain. Finally, the proposals as a whole were hardly couched in the definite and logical terms which were essential if they were to secure a favourable reception from the French Government. Proposals based on the guarantee of a Power which had declared its intention to withdraw, and had only lately been busily engaged in the endeavour to install self-governing institutions, were hardly likely to appeal to the representatives of that closely reasoning race.

The proposals in question were not in fact destined to travel so far, for they had equally little appeal for the Secretary of State, who found himself unable to accept the suggestions for judicial reform. In April 1912<sup>1</sup> he wrote a despatch to Kitchener to this effect. The full tenor of it was that, as the French were about to propose complete freedom of jurisdiction in Morocco, they would be bound to recognise our liberty of action in Egypt: that the German Government had promised to go as far as France went in supporting revision of the Capitulations: that the Italian Government would be sure to desire our goodwill towards the abrogation of the Capitulations in Tripoli: in short, that the moment was immensely favourable for attaining a revision. He urged Kitchener, therefore, not to consider over-carefully the degree of assent which might be expected, but to put forward the proposals best suited to the needs of the country.

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Sir E. Grey to Lord Kitchener, April 12, 1912.

And he suggested finally that, if the solution really lay in an ultimate fusion of the Mixed and Native Tribunals, it would be best perhaps to begin by extending the jurisdiction of the latter rather than of the former.

This despatch, in fact, clothed a suggestion for more careful consideration of the whole problem and for a detailed revision of the original proposals. Kitchener accepted the suggestion with astonishing speed and pliability. His reply<sup>1</sup> followed upon the Secretary of State's despatch so swiftly as to furnish strong presumptive evidence of lack of personal interest: and a close perusal of the reply only serves to confirm this impression. It almost falls over itself in its eagerness to abandon the position previously taken up, and paragraph after paragraph opens with lame excuses for that attitude and continues with an obsequious assurance that it is enthusiastically abandoned. He now informed the Secretary of State that, in his opinion, the Native Courts were quite competent to deal with all cases arising out of the civil, commercial, and criminal activities of all residents in Egypt. He proposed, therefore, that the Native Courts should be divided into two parts—a European and a Native. There should be a European majority on the bench of the former, and its procedure would be the same as he had originally suggested for the reformed Mixed Courts.

The practical effect of this proposal would be to do away with the Consular Courts—to make the Mixed Tribunals a European branch of the Native Tribunals and to transfer from the Powers to the Egyptian Government the right of appointing the judges of this branch. The proposals in regard to fiscal and

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Kitchener to Sir E. Grey, April 25, 1912.

legislative powers remained unaltered, except that the right of appeal to the Supreme Court for the purpose of enforcing the British undertakings was now omitted.

These proposals were submitted to the Governments of the Powers, and the story having been carried so far may as well be concluded without interruption. In February 1913, the Government of France despatched their reply,<sup>1</sup> which took exactly the line that might have been expected. They stated that in their opinion the guarantees offered under the proposals were insufficiently detailed, whereas they would have to be adequate and definite in order to counterbalance the safeguards now provided by the Capitulations. A further communication received a little later from the French Government was to the effect that it would be useless to submit to the French Chamber any proposal which did not define more or less precisely "*le statut nouveau qui serait donné aux Français en Egypte*". It again pointed out that the proposals substituted no valuable guarantee to counterbalance the existing privileges.

Fortified by this correspondence, Lord Grey returned to the charge. He at last succeeded in drawing from Cairo a much more considered and detailed expression of view. Kitchener now gave his full attention to the matter of the Capitulations. His next despatch was prefaced, as the first might well have been, by a general examination of the whole question.<sup>2</sup> He pointed out that the Capitulations were in reality exceptions and not rules. Foreigners were therefore amenable to the law of the country, unless specially exempted. From this premise he proceeded

<sup>1</sup> M. Cambon to Sir E. Grey, February 17, 1913.

<sup>2</sup> Lord Kitchener to Sir E. Grey, December 21, 1913.

to discuss Cromer's plan, but concluded that it was no longer feasible, history having now shown how little dependence could be placed upon the judgment of members of some of the foreign communities. He then remarked that on this assumption the effect of continued French opposition must be to force us to regularise our position in Egypt and put it on the same footing as theirs in Morocco.<sup>1</sup> He was at last, therefore, viewing the question in its true perspective. But the date was now late in the year 1913, and although his next step was to set up a committee to examine the existing judicial position and to draw up detailed proposals framed in the form of draft laws and decrees, the War intervened to hold up further negotiations, and the story of the committee's activities may well be deferred until the question comes to be considered again on the other side of the war years.

Kitchener also made a rapid and, in its results, somewhat unfortunate incursion into the field of constitutional development. His object was at once to reorganise the existing legislative bodies—the Legislative Council and the General Assembly—on a more practical basis, and to secure adequate representation for the interests of the agricultural population. To the legislature thus reorganised he did not propose to give any greatly extended responsibility, but only to increase its consultative functions and enlarge its powers of obstructing and retarding measures of which it did not approve. He strongly disapproved of any encouragement being shown to the so-called political classes: but he thought—and was encouraged in this view by the success of Gorst's Provincial Councils—that if an assembly could be created

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Lord Kitchener to Sir E. Grey, December 21, 1913.

composed of genuine representatives of the landed interests, and if those representatives could be protected from the influence of political agitation and of self-interested powers (both allusions are clear) it might be trusted beneficially to influence the Government and to employ its powers of obstruction wisely.

The hypothesis was, to say the least, highly speculative. "Political parties" had so far left the Provincial Councils undisturbed, probably regarding them as unworthy their activities, but they could hardly be trusted to keep aloof from the central legislature: and once they concentrated their energies upon it, it was, at the present level of education and intelligence, impossible that any machinery, however carefully devised, could save it from them.

Here was a further reversal of Gorst's policy: but again it was probably not deliberate; Kitchener clearly did not intend a large political development at the centre. He wanted to gain a tactical advantage by a measure of constitutional reform, and he apparently thought at the same time that he could so tinker with the constitution as to put more power, not into the hands of the political classes, but of the agricultural population—on whose well-being he founded all his hopes for the future of Egypt.<sup>1</sup>

Indeed, it seems quite clear that the kind of political advance which the Liberal elements in England desired was not in Kitchener's mind at all. The Organic Law of 1913 has often been regarded as an important constitutional change. But the only

<sup>1</sup> "I hope that the lesson has been learned that noisy extremists and outside political influences must be eliminated if the Assembly is really to represent the hard-working, unheard masses of the people who desire reform and improvement in their condition of life, and look for this result from the representatives they send to assist the Government in working for their good." (*Annual Report*, March 28, 1914, Introduction, para. 16.)

advance was that the new Assembly, while still remaining consultative only, was given functions slightly less nebulous than those possessed by its predecessors. Apart from this, the Law was nothing more than a rather speculative experiment carried out in the hope—personal to Kitchener himself—of so rearranging the franchise that the agricultural population would obtain a dominating representation. This was a thoroughly laudable objective, but the inexorable fact is that representative institutions invariably increase the strength of the urban as against the rural elements. The safest and wisest form of progress would assuredly have been by way of a development of Gorst's Provincial Councils, especially in view of their admitted success.

Kitchener's proposals were put into force in 1918: the new Legislative Assembly took the place of the old Legislative Council and Assembly. It was composed of seventeen nominated members, and sixty-six elected members all of them returned by indirect suffrage in the second degree. It had power to veto proposals for the increase of direct taxation, but otherwise its functions were only consultative and deliberative. Its proceedings were to be public: it could delay legislation, compel Ministers to justify their proposals at length, interrogate them and call for information. As part of the fabric of self-government, it can hardly have been satisfying to Egyptian political aspirations: nor, on the other hand, did it assist the gradual and healthy growth of Egyptian political institutions. As has already been pointed out, the measure was not intended to be more than a sop to political aspirations. Indeed, Kitchener's view, which he later made public, was that "representative bodies can only be safely developed when it is shown that they are



capable of performing adequately their present functions, and that there is good hope that they could undertake still more important and arduous responsibilities”.

“No Government would be insane enough”, he wrote, “to consider that because an advisory council had proved itself unable to carry out its functions in a reasonable and satisfactory manner, it should therefore be given a larger measure of power and control.”<sup>1</sup>

But he probably did hope that it would give an impetus towards the political strengthening of the rural population. Unfortunately, the most important of his underlying assumptions was immediately proved to have been false. The results of the first election were of good augury. Of the sixty-six elected members returned forty-nine were landowners, sound men, personally known to the electors. But Kitchener was utterly wrong in hoping that such men would be robustly independent of pernicious political influences. Wholly led away by such influences, the new Assembly spent its first session in the barren business of factious obstruction and of baiting Ministers in pursuance of personal feuds. This, however, was not until the early months of 1914, and the events of that year were destined to cut short the career of the new body altogether. By this time also Kitchener had become less sanguine of good results. He had tested the temper of the new Egypt and was not encouraged by what he found. In his report for 1913, he issued a strongly worded warning which shows clearly enough the kind of result that he then anticipated. “If”, he said, “outside influences and foolish counsels prevail, and the Assembly indulges in unjustified hostility, unseemly bickerings, and futile attempts to extend

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, March 18, 1914.

its own personal importance . . . it will convince all reasonable men that Egypt is not for the present fitted for those representative institutions which are now on their trial.”<sup>1</sup>

The warning was immediately shown to be justified. The result of the experiment was instructive in many ways, but it did nothing to solve the bewildering puzzle as to why the British Government so hotly pursued two utterly incompatible objectives. For if Great Britain was really anxious to have the Capitulations abrogated, she was behaving with incredible folly in choosing this moment for an extension of representative institutions in Egypt. It is perhaps possible to argue that had the experiment been a triumphant success, the arguments for retention of the capitulatory safeguards would have been enormously weakened. But the chances of such success were, at best, highly speculative, and to those with an intimate knowledge of the country almost negligible. To take those chances, therefore, was to abandon a much safer line of approach to the problem—the line of strong British control as a guarantee of security.

The French demand for more definite guarantees could have been met only by the stabilisation of the British position in Egypt. To answer it by an extension of self-governing institutions, however slight, was to make certain that the Capitulations would not be surrendered. From the Egyptian point of view the alternatives seemed equally clear. If they wished to secure the abrogation of the Capitulations, they could promote this object by abating their active hostility towards the British Occupation by making a success of political reform. If they regarded the

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, March 28, 1914.

termination of British control as immediately and at all costs desirable, they must be prepared to put up with the permanent existence of the Capitulations. In actual fact they chose always to work for the removal of the Occupation and not for the removal of the Capitulations. They chose what has proved in fact to be much the easier objective, for the practical effects of the Occupation have been almost entirely obliterated: and it is extremely doubtful whether the Capitulations could have been extinguished in the same period of time by anything short of annexation. At any rate they showed themselves very much more practical than the British Government, which in 1882 set itself to the pursuit of two objectives which were mutually exclusive, from 1907 to 1914 wasted much effort in another pursuit of the same kind, and has now apparently dropped out of the race from sheer exhaustion.

## CHAPTER X

### KITCHENER: HIS INTERNAL ADMINISTRATION

IF it is difficult to disentangle the motives which prompted Kitchener's dealings with the Capitulations and the Constitution, the case is very different when his administrative measures come to be considered. "Improved conditions of agriculture" were surely Egypt's real need, and he intended to give them to her. This was the reform in which he was really interested, and in regard to it his keen insight, which appears to have been so inactive in his incursions into the constitutional field, was quick to discern what was best and most effective to be done. There was no doubt that the agricultural problem was beginning to assume serious dimensions at this time. The fundamental cause of this state of affairs was a condition common to all Oriental countries, which has persisted for generation after generation. In the Book of Ecclesiastes, composed many centuries before Christ, the complaint runs as follows: "When goods increase, they are increased that eat them". In the report of the Commission on Indian Agriculture, written 1900 years after Christ, nothing is changed except the length of the words and sentences: "No lasting improvement in the standard of living of the great mass of the population can possibly

be attained if every enhancement in the purchasing power of the cultivator is to be followed by a proportionate increase in the population". In Egypt, when Kitchener arrived to take over, the population was increasing so much in proportion to the increase in the cultivable area of land, that it was already becoming doubtful whether the supply of land would not soon fall short of the demand.

Matters were made even worse than they might have been by the fact that while the peasant population was increasing rapidly, a certain amount of land was going out of cultivation. The drainage system had not, as we have seen, kept pace with the development of irrigation. Canals which in the old days had, in slack seasons, served a useful purpose as drainage channels, were now in continual use as distributors; so that water could not drain back into them from the land. And at the same time water was so comparatively plentiful that it was poured on the fields without a very close regard for minimum needs. As a result some areas were waterlogged, others were ruined by being impregnated with salt, and the maximum rate of normal development was not being maintained.

Another condition that needed immediate attention was the indebtedness of the cultivator. It is difficult for those who have not an intimate experience of Eastern villages to realise the extent to which their daily life is controlled by the money-lender. The natural thriftlessness of an uneducated and fatalistic people renders them an easy prey, and matters are perhaps worse than elsewhere on the shores of the Mediterranean, which are proverbially reputed to produce more than their share of the world's supply of usurers. For many years they had swarmed about

the fellaheen, who needed no pressure to accept their offers. Cromer had hoped to stem the tide of agricultural indebtedness by the foundation of an Agricultural Bank, but the fellaheen naturally preferred a system which asked fewer inconvenient questions and made fewer initial conditions. Nor does the policy of the Bank appear to have been of the wisest. It was over-capitalised, and had at the same time been improvident in its manner of granting loans. As a result 30 per cent. of its capital was now unemployed; it was calculated also that payment of interest on outstanding loans was nine months in arrears on an average; and the number of cases in which legal proceedings were the only method of recovery was so great that it was quite impossible to deal with them. The fact of the matter was that an Agricultural Bank could not meet the needs of the small landholders. The expense of investigating applications for small loans on the security of land was too great to make such business economic. The fellah was helpless in the clutches of the private money-lender and many small-holders were in danger of being evicted from their land for debt.

The third serious danger which threatened was not of the cultivator's own making. The figures were beginning to show that the cotton crop was suffering a serious deterioration in quality, and one of the chief causes was the ravages of the crop pests. No department existed for the special purpose of caring for agriculture, and the result was that no scientific attempt was being made to eradicate epidemic crop disease or improve strains.

The question of land shortage Kitchener attacked on two fronts. He had prepared an ambitious and expensive scheme of drainage and reclamation by

means of a chain of pumping stations. The early history of the scheme served well to illustrate his tenacity of purpose, for it was opposed both by the technical and the financial authorities. To Kitchener this was no reason for dropping the scheme, but a convincing reason for dropping those who opposed it. Whether he or they were right was not destined to be proved by the results, for in 1914 the scheme had perforce to be held up. But Kitchener had proved his absolute determination to brook no opposition, and when Sir Paul Harvey resigned his post as Financial Adviser, his successor was Lord Edward Cecil, who had little technical experience of finance but could be trusted unquestioningly to carry out the Consul-General's orders and generally to act as his Chief of Staff.

The same process of thought was visible in the first experiment of colonising hitherto uninhabited land, which was made in 1912. The attempt was made in the Province of Gharbiyeh. The Mudir of this province was an ambitious man. He estimated the possibilities of the situation and decided that it was more profitable to "show willing" than to work for real success. It was a shrewd gamble, for although the experiment at Gharbiyeh was a complete failure, the Mudir laid the foundations of a successful political career for himself. Another scheme, however, carried out later with the help of sounder advice and preparation was attended with better results.

The problem of agricultural indebtedness was attacked with equal speed and determination. In 1912 was promulgated what is known as the "5 Feddan law": its official title being the Homestead Exemption Law. Article 2 of this law laid down that "the agricultural holdings of farmers who do not own more

than 5 feddans of land cannot be seized for debt. This exemption includes the dwelling-house of such farms as well as two draft animals, and the agricultural implements necessary for the cultivation of the said land." A considerable outcry was raised at once by the interests affected. The Agricultural Bank protested and at once brought upon itself a vigorous counter-attack, which, in the existing state of its affairs, it was, as we have seen, ill-equipped to repel. Had it continued its opposition, it seems probable that Kitchener would have raised officially the whole question of its usefulness, and of whether it was carrying out the purpose for which it was instituted. It was perfectly natural also that the money-lenders should foment an agitation against such interference with individual liberty and should try to stir up pity for the poor cultivator who would now be unable to secure capital or credit. But such criticism was not justified: the small landowner could still borrow upon the security of his crop or upon personal security. It was a piece of legislation not the first of its kind. A similar law existed in America, but the closest model was the Punjab Land Alienation Act, a measure which has proved itself by encouraging thrift and checking borrowing. The 5 Feddan law was not, in fact, the hasty and ill-considered measure which it has sometimes been represented to be. It took shape so quickly that the public was taken by surprise, for that was Kitchener's method of working. But it was successful in preventing the eviction of small landholders, and in promoting much healthier standards of lending and borrowing. The ideal remedy was, of course, the co-operative society, but the growth of the co-operative spirit cannot be other than slow, especially in backward communities, and meanwhile



some more drastic remedy was essential. Finally, in 1918 a Ministry of Agriculture was created: the formation of such a department of Government was long overdue in a country to which agriculture was of such overwhelming importance, and it was of great benefit to the interests of the cultivator. But this did not exhaust Kitchener's benevolent activities towards him. Much encouragement was given to the development of transport: highways were built to keep pace with the growth of motor traffic: and light railways were promoted. Village savings banks were also opened, and halakas established for the weighing and storing of cotton.

The general effect of these measures was very beneficial not only from the practical point of view but also by their moral effect. The country was stirred by the general activity and development which Kitchener's personality and programme inspired, and an atmosphere of confidence and optimism was engendered. Meanwhile education continued, as in the past, to make little progress, and crime, as in the past, continued often to increase and never to decrease. We have already seen how these two departments suffered from the outset by reason of the policy which the British Government laid down for itself in Egypt. From the first they had been given only a meagre share of the European initiative and direction which had proved so beneficial in other departments: and again, when the changes of policy took place in 1906, they had been the very departments in which Egyptian Ministers had derived most freedom from the relaxation of British control. It seems to have escaped the observation of the authorities that if European ideals were to be inculcated this could only be done by European officers: and that if

those officers were deprived of the power to make themselves effective, the result would be a stagnation, damaging alike to the country's progress as well as to the prestige of European authority. In such conditions the European officers are driven either to an irritated opposition or to a melancholy complacency, both equally unavailing.

Education was not one of the subjects in which Kitchener took a keen interest: and had it been, it is still doubtful whether even his energy and pertinacity would have brought about a rapid amelioration.

Hardly less depressing is the story of the prevention of crime. Gorst, as we have seen, had made an endeavour to improve matters by appointing a new Adviser to the Interior,<sup>1</sup> whose preference was for sympathy over efficiency. The most probable explanation of this step was that it was intended as a first move in the endeavour to secure the support of the Egyptian Minister to a policy of improving the personnel of the Interior administration. But this endeavour was unsuccessful. The best men were not attracted by the office of Mudir: and although genuine efforts were made to secure them, it was soon apparent that they were not to be tempted. In fact, the standard instead of improving had noticeably declined with the relaxation of British interference. There was nothing for it, therefore, but to resuscitate the British supervising staff, and in 1909 a new department had been created in the Ministry of the Interior—The Nizam Inspectorate—to which were attached six British Inspectors, their duties being to supervise the activities of the Provincial Police and the Ghaffir force. The creation of this new department was not likely to put an end to the deplorable

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Chitty, *vide* chap. v.

feud between the Police and the Parquet and did not, in fact, do so. And it had a supremely difficult task in restoring the old standards of administration. The new Inspectors' powers were more restricted—the continuity of their authority had been broken—and their functions were a compromise which, to be successfully carried out, required greater knowledge of the country and more experience than they actually often possessed.

Meanwhile, the Police Surveillance Law had had a temporary success, but the dangers inherent in it had already become actual. Judge Marshall has written of it, "if it were in permanent working for a sufficient length of time, there is little doubt that, by a process of elimination, the bulk of the population would be sent to Khargeh (the penal settlement) as it affords such a scope for the exercise of private vengeance". Apparently the Government were of much the same opinion, for the provisions of the law were soon tacitly allowed to become a dead letter. The feud between the Police and the Parquet being still in full swing, and the emergency measures for the restriction of crime having been dropped, matters remained depressingly stagnant—the only movement being an increase in the volume of crime. And Kitchener's annual report for 1912 recorded a tendency on the part of Courts of Assize to a leniency which was not calculated to improve matters. In June 1912 there occurred a serious miscarriage of justice in one of the Courts of Assize: an Egyptian had committed a grave assault upon the members of a French family but was acquitted by a Bench of Egyptian judges. It was decided, therefore, to appoint an English judge to every Assize Court. But this was a move in the wider diplomatic game, and

could have only an incidental effect upon internal affairs.

It is known that Kitchener was investigating this question in 1912, and it is one for which his particular talents might have found a solution, but the War cut short this branch of his activities before it had borne fruit, and the crime problem remained still unsolved. Like the problem of education, it was one for the complete solution of which a considerable degree of co-operation was essential from Egyptians. Co-operation in the suppression of crime can only come where there is a widespread sense of civic responsibility, and in the provinces no such sense had as yet been engendered. The villagers were still children, and the only way to preserve order among them was by a discipline imposed from above. An honest and efficient Mudir could have achieved this with a competent police force working in with a competent department of Public Prosecution. But unfortunately the Parquet—the prosecuting arm—was the only one with the required attribute, and it did not, as we have seen, work in harmony with the Police. The Police could hardly be described as a competent force: the Mudirs were not, in most cases, of high quality, and when they were, they were not in a position, permanently, to compose the feuds of the Police and Parquet. The best solution would have been to get the best men as Mudirs and to give them control of the whole process of detection and prosecution: but in a country where selection was traditionally made by favour or family ties, this solution was practically ruled out. Until that tradition died and was replaced by a truer appreciation of merit, the next best course would have been to officer the Police with British officers, as in India. The Police in Cairo and Alex-

andria were so officered, and their efficiency was in striking contrast to the incompetence of the Provincial Police. But such a reorganisation would have been in direct opposition to the trend laid down for British policy, which was to lessen and not to increase the extent of British interference. Yet at the same time as the British Government was shying away from the most obvious solution of the crime question, it was endeavouring to secure the removal of the Capitulations; and the strongest argument against such removal was the deplorable state of public order in Egypt. The complex triangle of forces was at work here again. The problem would have been simple as between any two of those forces. As it stood it was baffling. It was clear that moral standards were not advancing in this respect, and many who had set their hopes upon the progress of education were inclined to attribute this defect also to the educational failure. But they forgot that moral education must have its main source in the home. The fact that the youth of Egypt were at this time turbulent and ill-disciplined must be attributed more to the failure of home-training than to the lack of discipline in the schools.

During Gorst's tenure of office, the problem appears to have been approached in a spirit almost of desperation. The Police Surveillance Law had been a hazardous remedy, quickly dropped when its defects began to show themselves. Another desperate measure had been the decision to give the Ghaffir force a short semi-military training and to arm them with Remington rifles. What exactly was the purpose of this decision, it would be hard to say. A course of military training would, no doubt, have improved the discipline and intelligence of the force, but the

training was semi-military, and the half preferred was that which dealt with musketry instruction. The Ghaffir force was not by any means free from the suspicion of criminal activities, and to instruct it in the use of rifles was a doubtful first step towards the prevention of crime.

Kitchener did not remain long enough in office to put into effect any measures to this end. And matters remained much as they were. The problem would not have been difficult to solve if public opinion had seriously reprobated the conditions existing. But in point of fact, human life in Egypt is cheaply regarded: the villages were rent by feuds: and the powers that were in the provinces, official as well as non-official, were more intent upon furthering their personal ambitions than upon promoting public security.

## CHAPTER XI

### EDUCATION

THE history of education in Egypt must receive at this point careful attention. Not only was our educational policy of supreme importance in its reaction upon our general policy: in actual fact it was in many respects the direct cause of the difficulties which have since gathered so thickly about our position.

At the time of which I am writing, the educational policy and administration of the Egyptian Government—and therefore of the British Occupation—was already subject to persistent criticism. Milner, who was the first to publish an apologia on behalf of the British in Egypt, had taken a sanguine view of the educational system. He regarded its future as bright in the extreme. "The time has now come", he wrote, "when the Government may feel sure that whatever additional resources it can devote to education will not be thrown away."<sup>1</sup> He believed, it is clear, that the Government schools were capable of providing an education of real value; but it is also clear that he was thinking only of the education of Government officials. "For my own part", he concludes his remarks on education, "I attach much more importance in the immediate future of Egypt to the im-

<sup>1</sup> *England in Egypt*, p. 303.

provement of the character and intelligence of the official class than I do to any development of the Representative Institutions with which we endowed the country in 1883.”<sup>1</sup> Milner’s book appeared in 1892 and at that early date it was perhaps possible to be sanguine. But the volume of criticism far from declining increased steadily thereafter, and during the last years of Cromer’s Consul-Generalship it was bitter in tone and searching in extent. Cromer’s own reply to it is to be found in the chapter on Education in the second volume of *Modern Egypt*. In defence of the policy which he had followed he could point with much justification to the financial difficulties of the early years, and to the fact that it was not until 1904 that the Anglo-French Convention had made it possible to provide any money worth speaking of for educational purposes. He could point also to the bewildering character of the material upon which he had to work.

The educational system which existed in Egypt at the commencement of the Occupation was, as we have already seen, in a chaotic condition. The indigenous Mahomedan system, entirely religious in character, had reached a stage of lifeless stagnancy, and nothing short of a vigorous renaissance could restore it. No such revival had been attempted, but side by side and in competition with this system had been introduced a French system of education. “Their wiseacres had seen the electric light in the West” and had clamoured blindly for it. Under Egyptian management and upon Egyptian soil they expected the new installation to function as brilliantly as upon French soil: but the expectation was by no means fulfilled. The result of the new venture was

<sup>1</sup> *England in Egypt*, p. 308.



merely to postpone indefinitely the essential reform of the native system, and to make confusion worse confounded. In 1883, therefore, the educational situation had become frankly impossible. The great majority of the Egyptian people did not desire education for their children at all and were averse to any scheme for providing it. The small minority who were interested in the subject could avail themselves of a primary education which had no value material or spiritual; there were also available to them two competing systems of secondary education, one of which was as stale and unprofitable as crass religious bigotry could make it, while the other was unsuitably devised, badly taught, and hardly as yet digested even by those who admired and introduced it. In the probable event of their rejecting all of these courses for their children, there remained only the alternatives of having them educated at the French High Schools in Egypt or of sending them to acquire a European education abroad.

It was clear enough, therefore, that some drastic upheaval was necessary—the difficulty was to decide what change was practicable. The indigenous religious education was in reality controlled almost completely by the University of El Azhar, a stronghold of Moslem orthodoxy, and at this time, by reason of the arid scholasticism of its teaching, an undoubted barrier to educational evolution. The students who attended it carried away with them a great deal of arrogant fanaticism and very little elasticity of mind or imagination. It would have been an immense step forward, therefore, if the El Azhar could have been persuaded out of its rut, for so long as it remained in this stagnant condition, no real progress was easily imaginable. But if such an eventu-

ality was beyond the bounds of possibility, then the only apparent hope lay in reforming the secular education which competed with it, until it became both popular and profitable: at which juncture the El Azhar would have had to reform itself or disappear. The former policy would have had one consequence of great, though indirect, value, in that it would have led to the gradual disappearance of the intolerance and bigotry which so long retarded Egypt's progress. The latter policy would have had a more direct effect by creating much needed bonds of sympathy between England and Egypt.

Unfortunately, Cromer was prevented by two insurmountable obstacles from taking any effective steps to deal with this important problem. In the first place the general policy of His Majesty's Government precluded any direct attempt to establish the influence of British culture. In the second place, even had the policy been different, financial difficulties would have proved too much for him. As he himself pointed out, it was not until 1904 that any funds could be made available for education. By that time the policy of making the best of things as they existed had got too firm a foothold to be dislodged without the most drastic action, and the time for drastic action had passed. French culture and the French language had been allowed to imbed themselves very firmly in Egypt. Cromer's wise and far-sighted efforts to secure the reform of the El Azhar from within had been rendered entirely fruitless by the general direction of Gorst's policy. The possibilities of the El Azhar as a centre of anti-British propaganda had long been realised by the Nationalists, who at once seized this opportunity to exploit them; and as a result there had grown up a Spirit which

would fiercely oppose the introduction of any greater British influence upon education, and would enlist for that opposition strong forces not only in European countries but in England itself.

Nevertheless Cromer's judgment was fundamentally sound upon this, as upon so many other questions. He laid no claim to be an educational expert, but his common sense and detachment were sufficient to provide him with the right solution. The chapter of *Modern Egypt* which he devotes to education, shows very clearly that, had he been able to decide the question entirely upon its merits, he would have chosen a policy of providing a widespread primary education scientifically adapted to the particular needs of the community, together with a secondary education carefully limited in quantity, and directed chiefly to supplying the technical and professional needs of the country. He quotes with whole-hearted approval from Mr. Lecky's *Democracy and Liberty*.<sup>1</sup> "The following remarks", he writes, "apply with great force to the Egyptian educational system. 'The great mistake in the education of the poor has in general been that it has been too largely and too ambitiously literary. Primary education should . . . teach the poor to write well and to count well; but for the rest it should be much more technical and industrial than literary, and should be more concerned with the observation of facts than with any form of speculative reasoning and opinions. There is much evidence to support the conclusion that the kinds of popular education which have proved morally, as well as intellectually, the most beneficial have been those in which a very moderate amount of purely mental instruction has been combined with

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt*, vol. ii. p. 535, footnote.

physical or industrial training.' In a very interesting article published in the *Edinburgh Review* . . . the disastrous results which have ensued from unduly encouraging a purely literary education in India . . . are very clearly indicated."

His personal ideas were clear enough, therefore, but even when in 1904 he found himself freed from financial difficulty and when his own prestige was so great that he could probably have persuaded the Government at home to any course he desired—even then he did not follow his own judgment in practice. Apparently he was held back not only because it was now too late to move in the right direction, but also by the Whig tradition from which he could never unfortunately quite escape. What he actually did was to appoint an Egyptian Minister of Education, and to leave him to work out the educational salvation of Egypt with a British Adviser, who could, it seems, be trusted most effectively to obstruct any schemes but those of his own devising.

Mr. Dunlop was a Scot, with all the tenacity of his race. His administration of the educational department could hardly have been described as alight with either insight or imagination, but he certainly succeeded in keeping the direction of Egyptian education tightly in his own grasp, and he maintained throughout a dour bureaucratic efficiency which was proof against all attacks.

This policy of Cromer's may have been unavoidable—a necessary concession to pressure from England or to Egyptian nationalism. But, although he agrees with the *Edinburgh Review* that Macaulay's policy had proved disastrous in India, he writes "the policy advocated by Macaulay is sound. Moreover it is the only policy worthy of a civilised nation." And so once

again, the literary and oratorical talents of that eminent Whig were permitted to impose upon an unfortunate country, which had no responsibility for him, a system of education fitly illustrating the crude insensibility of his sentiments and his judgment.

Owing to Macaulay and the international situation, Egypt got—not what Lecky and Cromer knew would have been best for her—but a system of education whose only goal was to turn out more and more young men fitted for nothing else but to be Government officials. The existing model of education was adhered to, and what is sometimes described as a “liberal education” was imposed upon a country to which it could bring no profit. We may perhaps urge in extenuation that we have been equally lacking in imagination in regard to our own educational affairs, and that a slavish adherence to existing practice is probably the chief cause of most of the difficulty in which our education at home is now floundering. We have built our own system, and still continue to build it, upon the model of the instruction imparted in a few great schools and universities, which, originally intended to prepare for the learned professions, were catering in Macaulay’s time almost entirely for the needs of a privileged class. This class was relieved, as to a large proportion, of the necessity to earn its living, and was the class from which the rulers were drawn, so that it could both afford the luxury of and draw real benefit from a purely cultural education. Conditions are very different in England now, and they were very different in India and in Egypt at the time when we began our educational work there, so that in introducing our system we were introducing one which was not naturally practical, and could only be made so by taking an official career as its goal. To

these remarks it may well be indignantly replied that education should not be practical and nothing more; but State education is very liable to come to grief, even in its native country, unless it confines itself to practical aims. In countries, moreover, where the Government is in alien hands, it is surely an impossible task to set it, that it should compulsorily impose an alien culture. The histories of India and of Egypt go far to corroborate this view and to teach that had the State confined itself to providing a widespread primary education and sound facilities—under English instruction and carefully proportioned to the needs of the community—for technical and professional education, it would have been building more durable foundations for real progress.

The educational failure was rendered still more conspicuous by the apathy of the Egyptians themselves towards education. Indeed, whatever policy had been adopted, it is still likely that the country would have remained blind to the intrinsic merits of education as an end in itself, and would have continued to regard it as having no value other than commercial. In spite of the mistakes of policy which were made by the British authorities, there was still a large field in which native effort could operate, but it failed conspicuously to do anything for itself. Although many Egyptians had long been agreed that the indigenous system of religious education was in urgent need of reform, nothing was done to effect such reform, or in any way to free the system from the trammels of bigotry and archaism. The project for an Egyptian University was mooted some years before Cromer's departure, and it received a good deal of Egyptian support while it was still in the stage of a pious aspiration: but it was many years before there

was any practical outcome, and when in 1909 an institution calling itself a University did arise it received no material support from Egyptians and its history is a melancholy one indeed. The worst evil of all was that of the "private schools" which were encouraged to multiply and flourish, simply because, although their standards of education and discipline were deplorable, they asked low fees and made no enquiries as to a pupil's antecedents: and Egyptian parents had not sufficient interest in their children's welfare to withstand these temptations. The only mildly encouraging symptom was to be found in the sphere of the Provincial Councils. In 1913 control of elementary schools was handed over to them, and they developed a healthy interest in this branch. Unfortunately this interest was never converted into practical measures, for, although a Commission was appointed to examine the subject, and although it drew much needed attention to existing defects, it produced no constructive proposals.

It may be true, therefore, that our interference was better than that Egypt should be left to work out her own educational salvation. But even the lack of co-operation that was received from the Egyptian public cannot excuse either the wrong direction of our policy or the inadequacy of the provision that was made under it. The department was always starved of money: an infinitesimal percentage of the revenue was yearly allocated to it, and the amount given to primary education was more pitifully meagre still. The report of the Commission, published in 1919, put the proportion at 2 per cent. and the annual primary expenditure at barely £20,000. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the State was miserably failing to supply even the legitimate demands made upon

it, and that qualified applicants were being turned away in large numbers from the higher specialised schools, simply because no facilities could be provided for training them there. Elementary education was not expanding, because utterly inadequate facilities were provided for training teachers. The standard, moreover, of discipline maintained in the State schools was a crying scandal, and not only became eventually a cause of constant political trouble but had further a disastrous effect upon the characters of the younger generation.

If it is assumed that our general policy—of setting up a Constitution in Egypt containing democratic checks upon authority—was the correct one, in that case it was all the more necessary that popular education should be carefully remoulded towards assisting the attainment of this object. In Government circles in England at this time, the faith was widely entertained that scholastic education had a magical power for achieving political progress. It would have been natural, therefore, to suppose that such a Government, entering upon its task in Egypt, would have insisted upon introducing an entirely Anglo-Saxon system of education in order to produce an Anglo-Saxon Constitution at the earliest possible moment. But the Government then in power was caught, as England is invariably caught, between conflicting ideals. Where is freedom to be found? we ask, but we can never supply a decisive answer. Good government in Egypt would provide freedom for the masses, but would mean government by us and consequently a lack of political freedom for the classes. The Liberal Government which found itself in occupation of Egypt did not, however, even pose the question apparently. Finding itself in occupation, it was too busy blushing



with shame at being discovered in so illiberal a position. In shy confusion it hastened to protest that it didn't intend to do much in Egypt or to stay long. It could not therefore proceed to remould education at all, and the result was the disastrous state of affairs which was made apparent in 1913.<sup>1</sup> We did not introduce any system calculated to spread English ideals and English culture, upon which alone could have been based the kind of constitution we desired to set up. Following Macaulay's unhappy example in India, we took instead the schools which already existed and turned them from factories of religious mendicants into factories of Government officials.

Apart from the direct disadvantages of such a course, there was also the very serious drawback that so many students were thus thrown into the foreign schools, particularly the French.

The French were traditionally and avowedly hostile to our Occupation of Egypt, and they did not let slip the opportunity which we gratuitously presented to them. Very many young Egyptians thus received, either in France or in Egypt itself, an education in an anti-British point of view. They could hardly be expected to emerge from their French studies entirely convinced of the sincerity of our political professions or of the disinterestedness of our motives. Nor can the French Government have been wholeheartedly sorry to notice that so many young Egyptians were receiving no specialised training, and were, therefore, unlikely to find employment in a country where there was no strong demand for black-coated workers.

In fact they must have derived both a particular and a general satisfaction from a comparative study

<sup>1</sup> Report of the Adviser to the Ministry of Education.

of their own methods of colonial education and ours. Their policy has always been to provide a fairly full measure of primary education in their colonial dependencies, but to restrict facilities for higher education to those who are likely to benefit from it, in other words, to find remunerative employment as a result of it. Facilities for study abroad are provided by the administration itself, and are, of course, confined to the universities of the mother country. The same severely practical principles are the foundation of their general colonial policy; as well as of that of the Dutch and Italians. In Morocco and Tunis and Indo-China, in Libya, and in the Dutch East Indies, although representative institutions do exist, they are composed by means of nomination rather than by election, and their powers are carefully circumscribed. The State interferes to secure reciprocity of trade and to discourage foreign intrusion. It does not interfere with local institutions, except in so far as is necessary to maintain a firm hold upon profitable dependencies. The object of policy is, in fact, not to autonomise but to civilise and assimilate, as has been done so successfully in Algeria, whose deputies and senators now sit in the French Parliament.

Such a basis of policy would at once be repudiated by the sense of the English nation. It would not satisfy our craving for the stimulus of romantic ideals. But it must be sorrowfully confessed that it appears temporarily, at any rate, to be found by the dependent nations concerned more satisfying than the rather misty doctrine of rights and privileges which we supply. Since the War, while French and Italian dependencies have remained outwardly contented, Egypt, India, and Palestine have been the scenes of violent discontent, with continuous expressions of ill will.

I do not desire to enter into a discussion of the comparative merits of the two policies. It would be valueless, if for no other reason, simply because they are the outcome of different national temperaments. We have acted according to our nature and could not have done otherwise. If we are to blame, it is not because of our policy but because of the curious conflict which is always apparent in its execution. Out of the struggle of ideals, a constant vacillation and hesitancy results. And nowhere is this more apparent than in our educational work. It is difficult, in fact, to avoid the general conclusion that, so far as higher education in its literary and cultural aspects is concerned, the work of development should be quite definitely left to indigenous initiative and resources. By such initiative and resources alone can any living seed of real culture be sown and cultivated. That at any rate is the clear lesson to be drawn from the history of our own efforts in this field, which were otherwise sufficiently disinterested, intelligently enough conceived, and practical enough to command success. There is considerable evidence to show that the authorities in Egypt had learnt this lesson by 1904, but the general policy to which they had so long subscribed prevented them from taking action accordingly. Macaulay was still their prophet: and the pathetic decision was taken to disregard the glaring failure which had already overtaken his educational policy.

## CHAPTER XII

### KITCHENER AND THE KHEDIVE: KITCHENER'S WORK REVIEWED

THE long digression which constituted the last chapter makes it now imperative to complete the story of Kitchener's activities in Egypt: a story of which the chief remaining incident concerns his relations with Abbas Hilmi II.

It did not seem possible that a friendly alliance could long endure between Kitchener with his abrupt impatience of opposition and the Khedive whose early years had been largely spent in opposition to the British Agent. And there were now very few reasons of expediency to cause hesitation, should a rupture occur. Zaghlul, in his post as Minister of Justice, had, as was anticipated, come into conflict with Abbas II. and resigned his office in April 1912. He had thereafter become Vice-President of the new Legislative Assembly and had attained a popularity and influence which were at this time wholly directed against the Khedive. The latter's popularity was being undermined, and it was indiscreet of him to indulge in operations calculated seriously to provoke the Consul-General and His Majesty's Government. Perhaps he was becoming reckless. Certainly his action in regard to the Mariut railway, as read in the

official records, showed a departure from his former careful skill. In 1899 he had received a personal concession to construct a small railway from Alexandria to certain estates which he possessed on the edge of the western desert. He had gradually constructed and extended this railway until it reached to a point 280 kilometres west of Alexandria and was an important item in the means of communication with the western frontier. Since the outbreak of war between Italy and Turkey he had been much suspected by the Italian Government of being in close touch with the Senussi and the Arabs of Cyrenaica, and was therefore not only a thorn in the flesh of the Italian Occupation, but one which the Italian Government found exceptional difficulty in extracting. It was, very possibly, a result of Italian efforts at extraction that in 1913 information reached Kitchener that Abbas had sold to an Italian syndicate, backed by the *Banco di Roma*, an option on the Mariut Railway, with permission to extend it to the frontier post of Sollum.

In defence of the Khedive it has been constantly alleged that matters had never got beyond the stage of his receiving from the syndicate an offer to which he had not replied: and the accusation made against him in this connection has been countered by affirming that, fully a year before this incident took place, he had made an offer to Kitchener to hand over the Mariut Railway at the price which it had originally cost him, and indeed at a kilometric value considerably lower than was then current. Whatever the facts may be in regard to this latter allegation, it does not seem to afford a very real justification for negotiating with Italian buyers. It would be pleasanter to know, and to know only, that negotiations with those buyers

had gone no further than was alleged by the Khedive's defenders.

These matters are now unfortunately no longer susceptible of definite proof: what is known for certain is that Kitchener took action at once. It was not difficult to secure the surrender of the option, when it was pointed out to those who held it that the Khedive was endeavouring to cash something which he did not possess. The concession of 1899 was a personal concession only, and the railway was in fact built upon land belonging to the Egyptian Government. A sharp warning was also issued to the Khedive.

Almost at the same time he was assaulted upon another flank. The Waqf department, which administered the large funds bequeathed by pious donors in trust for religious and charitable objects or in favour of individuals, had until this time been under the personal control of the Khedive. Whatever had been the reason there was no doubt that the department was now in a deplorable condition, and its administration had been a grave scandal for several years. Gross irregularities were proved to have been committed from which members of the Khedive's entourage had not failed to profit, and there was substantial ground for the belief that a large portion of the misappropriated moneys had been spent in fomenting agitation against the Occupation. In spite of strong opposition from the Khedive, Kitchener had his way in putting an end to all this. A new Ministry was created in 1913 for the purpose of administering, under charge of a responsible Minister, the Department of Waqfs, and Abbas met his second serious reverse.

His prestige must have suffered severely from both, and there was now a prospect that Kitchener

might pass to examination of other matters under his personal administration, as, for instance, the disposal of grades and decorations. Undeterred, however, his fertile brain discovered a new method of restoring his position. In 1914 he undertook a formal tour of the provinces in order that, as a good prince should, he might show himself to his dutiful subjects. Tickets for the exhibition were expensive. But the Oriental regards these levies as the natural right of princes, and those who had the privilege of entertaining Abbas paid over cheerfully. He was accorded a warm and costly reception. One luncheon given to him cost £1000, and the item duly appeared in the accounts of the Provincial Council under the heading "Higher Education". When all the circumstances are taken into account, the entry will be seen to possess an appealing delicacy. Hardly less delicate was the compliment paid to the Khedive when at Mediba the chair in which he sat began of its own volition to play the Khedivial anthem directly it felt the royal weight. Strange legends gather round the movements of Oriental princes. It is said that the royal train used to steam with unexpected suddenness out of stations where the parting cup of coffee had been proffered to the royal guest in a golden container barbarically encrusted with precious stones. But in spite of this temporary success, things were not going well with him, and his days were probably numbered. He had fallen out with the Prime Minister of his own choosing, who having served him so long was now to receive the usual reward. Mohamed Said had, on the whole, not failed to co-operate with the Residency, but he was a disruptive force in the Cabinet, given over to tortuous intrigue, and tactless in the Assembly. Kitchener therefore did not choose

to do battle on his behalf and he fell. The Khedive had then to work hard to prevent the appointment of his old enemy Mustapha Pasha Fehmy. The latter was sounded by Kitchener, but his health was failing and his doctor would only let him take the Premiership without portfolio. On this understanding he went to work to form a Cabinet, but was astonished to read in the *Gazette* that Hussein Rushdi Pasha's appointment to the Premiership had been officially announced. The real facts were that Kitchener, although he had yielded to the Khedive's wishes in regard to Mohamed Said, particularly wished to retain in the Cabinet two other Ministers, one at least of whom was generally regarded with suspicion and dislike. Of these Hishmet Pasha was heartily disliked by Abbas, but would not have proved entirely unacceptable to the public; but Muhib Pasha, although extremely able, was generally considered to be corrupt and dishonest. Mustapha Fehmy was not prepared to accept these two as colleagues, and when Kitchener insisted upon their retention he retired to Luxor to reconsider his position. A trusted emissary—Mr. Storrs—followed him from the Consul-General to beg him to give way and include Hishmet and Muhib, but Mustapha Fehmy was firm even against this envoy's well-known powers of persuasion. By this refusal Kitchener felt that his hands were freed: he discarded Hishmet, who was not the real source of contention, but included Muhib whom nobody but himself desired in the Cabinet. His next task was to find a Prime Minister, and in the circumstances it was by no means easy. It was fortunate that at this point he accepted sound advice, and offered the post to Hussein Rushdi Pasha. Mustapha Pasha Fehmy, however, was deeply hurt, considering that he had



been treated with brusque discourtesy, and he never forgave Kitchener.

It was another instance of Kitchener's method of securing his objectives. This method had led to the resignation of some valuable servants of the Egyptian Government, and to the appointment of others whose qualifications were sadly to seek. The number of British officials was rapidly increasing and their standard was beginning to deteriorate. Kitchener's high-handed methods, his impatient disregard of departmental etiquette, and his personal prejudices did not create an atmosphere in which the best men could work. Even those who gave good advice and found it accepted must often have felt that this was due to a fortunate accident rather than to merit.

The same causes would probably soon have operated to dispose of the Khedive. Kitchener was already satisfied that the prospect of his deposition could be faced with equanimity, and he went home in 1914 determined to procure from the British Government an ultimatum which he might present on his return. But he never returned. The War claimed him; it severed his connection with Egypt, and with a fine impartiality it severed that of Abbas Hilmi at the same time.

Kitchener's tenure of office, like that of Gorst, was of very brief duration. It is difficult therefore to assess fairly his value as an administrator. The salient facts of his three years at the head of the Egyptian administration are clear enough. For the main direction and intent of his policy the people of Egypt owe and have given him their lasting gratitude. His policy was to promote the material welfare of the fellaheen. He had his own schemes for the purpose, and what interested him was that those schemes should be put

into operation as little modified and with as little delay as possible. Those schemes, however open to criticism in detail, were conceived on far-seeing lines and based upon a clear insight into the needs of the situation. Other matters interested him not at all or only incidentally. Questions relating to political progress he regarded either as routine duties or as fields for entertaining experiment—to be dealt with and got out of the way as quickly as possible, so that the field might be free for more interesting work. What he did for agriculture was therefore fine enduring work. But his intervention in the struggle for the removal of the Capitulations had little or no effect upon that situation: and his experiment in regard to the political institutions of Egypt might easily have proved disastrous to her political health. Yet, whatever may have been the defects in his programme, the fact remains that, although a spirit of turbulent unrest had been aroused by Gorst's experiment, and though grave difficulties had been engendered out of the Mediterranean situation and the uncertainties and alarms into which the Ottoman Empire was plunged, Egypt again achieved a measure of tranquillity, and her prosperous progress was upset by few political storms.

It is possible to argue that this was due to Kitchener's policy, and that his return to the pursuit of material as opposed to political welfare had wrought the change; but it must be remembered that he did in fact introduce an important political reform, and that a bleak reversal of previous policy could hardly by itself have produced an immediate tranquillisation. The glamour of his past career and the imposing strength of his personality were undoubtedly assets of which it is hard to overestimate the value,

and they enabled him successfully to overcome the dangers of the situation created by the Turco-Italian and the Balkan Wars and the impending dissolution of the old Ottoman Empire. Had the Young Turk Party possessed a practical and coherent policy, those dangers would have been infinitely greater, but in fact the Committee of Union and Progress were in a position of bewildered difficulty. Their ambition and enthusiasm were not enough to save them, for they centred upon no clear policy. They had dealt with their own hands a severe blow at the temporal power of Islam and had weakened the authority of the Caliphate; but they still could not surrender the weapon of Pan-Islamism. One policy at home and another abroad was their ineffectual endeavour: and when they abandoned this it was in favour of the attempt to rally Ottoman loyalty again. The attempt was ineffectual, because it was clear that their own follies had brought the Ottoman Empire finally to its position of hazard and internal weakness: and in Egypt, at any rate, Ottoman sentiment possessed no wide appeal. In circumstances of such uncertainty, it was natural that each country should regard its own security as of the first importance: and Kitchener with his firm purposefulness was a rallying point, the comfort of which Egyptians were only too glad to recognise. His steady and skilful maintenance of Egypt's neutrality, and his firm suppression of all foreign intrigues, confirmed the view that here was the man to keep Egypt out of trouble; and Egypt, with no particularly strong ties binding her to the Turks, and with the tempting prospect before her of rapidly increasing prosperity, was naturally anxious to keep out of trouble.

Since the collapse of 1907, recovery had been slow,

and it was not till 1911 that the revenue of the State again showed a tendency to expand, in response to the general economic recovery. The lean years of 1907 to 1911 were the same years in which political unrest had been at its worst, and in any other Eastern country except Egypt it would be legitimate to infer that there was a definite causal connection between these two facts. In almost all Asiatic countries it is true to say that political agitation does not become really dangerous unless economic distress is prevalent. In Egypt, however, it is not the national habit to become lean and discontented together: Egyptians rather tend to follow the Biblical precedent and, like Jeshurun, to combine waxing fat with kicking.

When Kitchener arrived in Egypt the tide of economic prosperity had turned, and was on the flow again. But even if, contrary to normal experience, it is this fact which was the real cause of the return of tranquillity, and even if Kitchener's task was rendered easier by the recovery, still, the whole story has not yet been told. The tranquillity which ensued may have had its origin in natural prosperity: but to Kitchener's insight belongs the credit of having recognised the opportunity. He has been criticised for extravagant expenditure, but that expenditure was mostly of a productive character, all tending to promote the cheerful confidence and sense of well-being of the people. Egypt was feeling well; measures were being taken to make her feel better still: sickness was rife in her neighbourhood: but her guardian was wise and firm in directing her relations with the outside world. She had therefore a great deal to lose and very little to gain by agitation, and things were good as they were. But to say merely that he had good luck and made

good use of it would be to do much less than justice to Kitchener's great qualities. Felix, Faustus, Fortunatus are epithets which have often been applied to great men, and it is at least a frequent coincidence that outstanding personalities receive more than an average share of fortune's favours. In the East especially, personality counts for very much. Defects are condoned in its possessor, or often regarded as symptoms of greatness. Cromer had the quality, and so had Kitchener, and both were successful. Yet Kitchener was not of Cromer's stature. He had not, in the first place, the variety and intensity of interest which was a fundamental cause of Cromer's greatness, and never fails to astonish the observer. While Cromer was always ready to explore every field of administrative activity, even of human, with the same impartial concentration, Kitchener contemptuously dismissed certain branches as being unworthy of attention. When they were thrust upon his notice in the course of his duty he dealt with them in much the same spirit, giving to them only as much of his time and energy as might suffice to clear them out of the way. In the second place, although Cromer was capable of a considerable sternness towards opposition, and although his detachment made him seem at times forgetful of the debt he owed to the services rendered him by those who worked for him, he never exhibited the ruthless impatience which more than once characterised Kitchener's dealings with his subordinates. We have already noticed instances in which Kitchener's dismissals and appointments were made rather with a view to stifling independent views than to retaining or procuring the best material available; and, in these circumstances, it was fortunate that the Consul-General reposed a large measure

of confidence in Mr. Storrs, who, as a member of the Ministry of Finance, had known Egypt and the Egyptian Government since 1904, from within as well as from without, and had identified himself with the life of the country. Co-founder of the Coptic Museum, a leading spirit in the *Comité pour la Conservation des Monuments Arabes*, equally at home in Moslem, Christian, Jewish and diplomatic circles, it seemed natural that Kitchener, who relied on his judgment, said of him: "I always announce pleasant news myself, and unpleasant through Storrs". But in general it was true of Kitchener that, once his own mind was made up, he was unable to tolerate criticism of his plans, however disinterested and sincere: and he exhibited even the worse defect which is the complement of this attitude of mind, for he was also liable to be deceived by inefficiency and dishonesty provided that it displayed a sufficient agreement with his own views. The worst result of this was probably not its direct effect upon the standard of administration, but that indirectly there grew up a lack of touch between the Residency and the individual officials who were serving in the higher posts in Egypt. Of this lack of touch, the most dangerous effects only became apparent during the War. This narrowing of his field of vision rendered Kitchener, great as he was, the inferior of Cromer, and it was undeniably a symptom of an intellect which was not in all respects first rate. Judged by intellectual standards only, Kitchener was almost certainly the inferior of his predecessor, Gorst, but he had flashes of intuition which were often triumphantly accurate, and he had that imposing force of personality which, for purposes of administration, is, at the lowest computation, of equal value to reasoning power.

Thirty-two years had now elapsed since the Occupation began, and Britain had certainly given to Egypt the best that she had produced during that generation. That she should have done so was perhaps of much greater importance than the policy which she directed them to carry out, for it is probable that personalities count more than policies in the countries of the East. But best of all is undeniably a policy based upon principles that are simple and sound and a careful selection of the best agents to administer it. Cromer was handicapped at every stage because the policy he was asked to promote was at variance with the facts as they actually were: nevertheless he achieved a very large measure of good, because he refused to blink the facts. He continually modified the policy to make it suit the facts, and to the extent of that modification he was successful. But he would never admit that the policy was based upon a theory which could not be universally applied, and out of that attitude arose many of the subsequent difficulties in Egypt. Gorst attempted, on the other hand, to apply the policy more fully in disregard of the facts, and the facts were too much for him: but his career was too short for us to form any opinion as to whether he would subsequently have reverted to Cromer's realist tactics, or even have urged a change of policy. It might naturally have been anticipated that Kitchener would have shown himself the sternest realist of the three. A soldier by profession, a strong man with wide experience and a natural distaste for political programmes—he might confidently have been expected to throw over a policy based upon mere theory, to resist the dictation of a party Government, and to produce a practical plan based upon the actual needs of the situation and upon those needs alone.

Instead we find him condemning party strife and then introducing a measure of political reform which greatly increased the intensity of that strife in Egypt. It is impossible to refrain from speculating as to what would have been the developments under Kitchener had the War never broken out. If he had returned from England in the autumn of 1914 with authority to issue an ultimatum to the Khedive, and if necessary to depose him, he would still have had to deal with the Legislative Assembly which he had himself created. In that Assembly Zaghlul and the solid phalanx of his followers were a force which would have demanded to be reckoned with, for they had it in their power to make the work of the Ministry difficult if not impossible. It seems more than probable that before long the stage would have been set for a battle between Zaghlul and Kitchener, and then would have been the acid test of the statesmanship of both.

It is hardly probable that a compromise would have been reached between these two men, although Zaghlul was not yet so far committed to hostility and agitation that it would not have been possible to reclaim him by careful treatment. That Kitchener saw no occasion at present for such treatment is clear enough from the following incident. Just about this time the post of Intendant of the Egyptian Educational Mission in Paris was rendered vacant by the death of Yakub Pasha Artin. As Zaghlul was in low water financially, his father-in-law, Mustapha Pasha Fehmy, forthwith wrote to Kitchener, and, as an old friend and supporter of the administration, bespoke the favour of this appointment for Zaghlul. To the Consul-General's most experienced advisers it seemed a heaven-sent opportunity: by granting this request,



two influential people would be gratified, and a politician who was beginning to display dangerous proclivities towards agitation would have been removed from the field. Unfortunately, this was one of the moments when personal considerations were swaying Kitchener's judgment: Zaghlul had been hostile and discourteous to him: he would do no favour to Zaghlul: the opportunity was lost. It is useless, however, to speculate as to what might have been. We can only sincerely deplore the fact that at the time of the great crisis in Egypt the advice and influence of the great Proconsuls were no longer available.

When Kitchener sailed for England in 1914, Egypt was busy with her own problems. The stage was occupied with scenes of normal economic and political activity: and upon it the protagonists were busy in the discussion of those questions that had so long held the field: the Capitulations, constitutional reform, agricultural development, the price of cotton.

Before he could return, and almost without warning, the iron curtain of War descended irrevocably.

When it rose again, a little over four years later, it was to discover that destiny had been busy shifting the scene. The stage was now set for a very different play: and had the old actors returned upon it they would have found it strangely unfamiliar. Little wonder then that when in 1918 those in authority were suddenly asked to withdraw their attention from their own country's life-and-death struggle and turn it upon the affairs of Egypt, they failed to pick up correctly the broken threads of the story.

## CHAPTER XIII

### 1914. THE OUTBREAK OF WAR: ITS CONSEQUENCES IN EGYPT

It is difficult to present an adequate picture of the effect which the War produced in Egypt. Upon other countries engaged it descended with unanticipated force: it threw their populations violently into another world—a world where all peaceful activities were suddenly cut short and all energies must be concentrated upon the pursuit of victory. With the cessation of hostilities, they had to wrench themselves painfully back into the old routine and habits, and adjust themselves at the same time to changes which had taken place unperceived. For into the space of four years had been crowded developments which normally would have taken a generation or more to evolve. The process was as painful and bewildering as the return from anaesthesia to consciousness, as strange in many respects as Rip van Winkle's awakening.

But Egypt's position was unique. She was neither combatant nor neutral: she was in the heart of the strife, and yet not of it. In this position she never, so to speak, lost consciousness, nor the sense of continuity of her own problems. For England, Egypt became a theatre of war, merely a battle-front of the

greatest importance. But to herself she was still a country occupied with her own political and economic problems, intensely aware of their importance, and only incidentally concerned with the issues of the armed struggle.

As a result, her point of view and that of Great Britain swung apart as widely as the poles, and all means of communication ultimately ceased. She saw herself as a country with a political grievance waiting to be removed. She realised, of course, that until the War was ended nothing definite could be done in the matter, but for her the War had importance only as an interruption to the furtherance of her own interests. Every move in the struggle was considered primarily in the light of its effect upon that furtherance. By each action of the British authority she was moved to resentment or appreciation, according as it appeared to help or to hinder the objects she had at heart. Her affections were not engaged on this side or on that—sentiment had no weight in her calculations: her outlook was concentrated all on self.

The attitude was natural enough, and ought to have pleased Great Britain, who (in view of her policy) should have been satisfied—and at the outset was more than satisfied—merely with an absence of hostility. To have a genuinely neutral people in Egypt was a great advantage, the more welcome because it was hardly anticipated.

But we ourselves became gradually more and more absorbed in the progress of our own swaying fortunes, and as we did so our attitude changed and became as self-centred as that of Egypt. Our attention inevitably became more and more intensely concerned with the pursuit of victory, and other matters ceased to have importance. By the year 1916 we had turned the

Nile Delta into an armed camp, in which none but combatants received much consideration. The members of the Expeditionary Force who arrived at Port Said or Suez found these towns under a martial régime which was framed for their better discipline and benefit, and had little regard for the interests of the inhabitants. The Suez Canal was an Allied line of communication; its base camps at Ismailia and Kantara were the home of Australians, Indians, and British, in which the Egyptians were hewers of wood and drawers of water. Cairo and Alexandria were the troops' leave-time playgrounds in which they hunted avidly for recreation. As for the Egyptian residents who did not directly contribute to their pleasures, their existence was hardly noticed. If they were glimpsed among the khaki-clad figures in hotel or restaurant, it was probably with the feeling that they weren't doing much in the Great War, and must be making a lot of money at the same time. Meanwhile, the Civil Government, who should have been looking after their interests, was being submerged beneath a deluge of generals and staff-officers. Of the former it was said that there were as many in Cairo as there were piastres in the pound. But the country looked prosperous enough to support any number of them, and in any case the troops passed a great deal of money into Egyptian pockets, much of it for trash for which unscrupulous vendors demanded high prices.

The general attitude of easy-going, rather contemptuous lack of interest must have been intensely wounding to a hyper-sensitive people, still suffering from an "inferiority complex". That they were not taking active part in a war which was not theirs, and in which they had not been asked to help, was a reproach of which they were quite unconscious. It

was not their fault, but the fault of circumstance, if prosperity came to them while other nations were fighting for their lives.

The Khedive was paying his usual summer visit to the Bosphorus, a visit made more exciting than usual by an attempted assassination which came very near to being successful. There is much reason to believe that at this very critical juncture in his country's affairs he made a prompt offer to return, but in view of his well-known proclivities it was unlikely that the offer would be accepted. He passes now from the picture, a personality not without charm, but dangerously narrow in his passions and his prejudices.

Hussein Rushdi, the Prime Minister, was acting as Regent with a Cabinet of considerable strength behind him. Hussein Rushdi Pasha was justly proud of his origin: he belonged to one of the Albanian families that came over to Egypt with Mohamed Ali and was one of the few descendants of that stock now remaining. He had been a judge of the Mixed Court, and was in due course selected to be the Khedive's Minister of Waqfs, in which office he had set a rare precedent of honesty. His next portfolio was that of Justice, which he was holding when Kitchener chose him for the Premiership left vacant by the Khedive's break with Mohamed Said. It cannot be disputed that, especially in the early and difficult days of the War, he thoroughly justified the choice. He is described as small and birdlike in appearance. He was good company, the centre of many convivial gatherings, and not without some political courage. The position in which he now found himself was one which would require that quality to an unusual degree, and he appears to have felt its responsibilities heavily. It is not entirely surprising,

however, to find evidence that while Rushdi Pasha was making public professions of his anxiety for the Khedive's return and thus to relieve him of some part of his responsibilities, he was at the same time strongly advising British authorities in no circumstances to allow it.

Hardly twenty-four hours had elapsed after the declaration of war, when the Council of Ministers issued a Proclamation<sup>1</sup> which left little doubt as to what was to be the official attitude in the present state of hostilities. The Proclamation began by pointing out that "the presence of the British Army of Occupation in Egypt renders the country liable to attack by the enemies of His Britannic Majesty". In order to guard against the dangers of this possibility, Egyptian subjects were forbidden to take certain action. They might not conclude any agreement with, nor subscribe to, any loan issued by any country at war with Great Britain. They might not do any kind of business with enemy subjects: and finally they were urged to lend all possible aid to Great Britain.

This declaration was welcomed by the British authorities as highly satisfactory. It certainly cleared the air propitiously; it left the people of Egypt in no doubt as to where their constitutional leaders stood, and it paved the way for future co-operation between the Government and the accredited representatives of British power. It cannot be pretended, however, that the declaration was inspired by a wave of spontaneous enthusiasm for the British cause. The Prime Minister, moreover, was naturally of a subtle and cautious temper, and was labouring at this juncture under the heavy responsibility of a Regency in unprecedented conditions, so that it was hardly

<sup>1</sup> Decree of the Council of Ministers, August 5, 1914.

likely that he would have committed himself of his own volition to any definite pronouncement. Later on, indeed, he was accused by his own countrymen of having by this declaration given away a very valuable bargaining position. But the accusation was unjust, for from the very phrases of the declaration itself it is clear enough that definite pressure was applied from the Residency to secure a pronouncement in some such terms. Under such pressure and at such time the Prime Minister had no alternative but to give way. A recalcitrant Egypt could have expected little mercy, while a compliant Egypt might later have an opportunity to claim her reward. With almost equally little justice, it has been argued that the British authorities were wrong to use any sort of moral coercion towards the Egyptian Government for such a purpose: that the declaration brought very little advantage, and that there was a definite disadvantage in putting pressure upon Egypt at this time unless some urgent need required it. It is true, of course, that little really ponderable evidence was forthcoming at this time to show that Egyptian opinion might be inclined to attempt action hostile to the British cause. Egyptian Nationalist policy had been stimulated to considerable excitement by the triumphant progress of German armies through Belgium and the bazaar rumours of heavy reverses to British arms: and we have it on the authority of Sir Ronald Storrs, then Oriental Secretary, that: "At the beginning of the War there appears to have been in certain circles a wave of anti-English and Germanophil feeling so marked as to amaze some Europeans and to puzzle even Egyptian observers". But he also wrote, in the same context: "Pious Moslems, when they are not openly anti-Turk, will shake their heads and say—

'We wish the Turks all success—from afar', the last portion of the benison receiving the accent".<sup>1</sup>

The inference is plain that the outbreak of hostilities immediately revived and augmented, for the time being, the hostile feelings and hopes of those who were and had always been our enemies in Egypt, but it is clear also that the main body of Moslem and Egyptian opinion was provoked to a greater rather than a less friendship by the circumstances and possibilities of the situation. Moreover, Egypt's principal difficulty at this time was in the sudden dislocation of the normal channels of her economic life, and from this difficulty Great Britain was the only Power that could extricate her. Great Britain controlled the seas, and was, therefore, the only source from which Egypt could be securely provided with the shipping necessary to carry her exports: and British armed forces occupied Egyptian territory. It was unlikely, therefore, that a country which was faced with the immediate possibility of a serious economic crisis could be contemplating political action which clearly had little chance of success, and would only serve to precipitate that crisis. But at the same time it must be remembered that a definite declaration of departure from neutrality in favour of Great Britain on the part of the Regent and the Council of Ministers would directly commit Egypt on the right side, and would open the door to the possibility of more definite and active co-operation in the future. The danger was not that no declaration might be made by the Government: the imminent danger was that they might officially reaffirm Egyptian neutrality and so put upon England

<sup>1</sup> Note by R. Storrs (now H.E. Sir R. Storrs, K.C.M.G., C.B.E., Governor N. Rhodesia).



the unpleasant onus of coercing a neutral country into taking the belligerent action which would inevitably become necessary. There can, in fact, be little doubt that the action of the Residency was the wisest way to obviate a serious difficulty which now threatened.

At the moment, however, there was little leisure for thinking over such issues. The minds of most Egyptians were fully occupied with the problem of how the year's crop was to be disposed of in view of the sudden dislocation of markets and trade-routes; and already a financial panic was threatening the banks. By a decree, dated August 2, 1914, the Council of Ministers declared the note issue of the National Bank to be inconvertible tender. And on the 4th August a moratorium was declared, to extend over five days in the first instance. Again on the 9th August a general suspension of current commercial operations was decreed. By these means the exchange value of the currency was maintained, and the danger of a panic rush upon the banks or of a tumult on the bourse was averted.

Wise action was also taken to restrict the area to be planted with cotton, thereby ensuring a better supply of food crops. But the most difficult problem of all was the problem of helping the agriculturist to sell his just-harvested cotton crop, and so to pay his land-tax. The first attempt to ease this situation by providing loans on the crop through the medium of the National Bank was not successful; the fact was that the fellaheen were sure that the British Government would have in the end to get them out of their fix, and they preferred to await the inevitable moment. Finally, in November the difficulty was overcome by a definite order to merchants to buy

cotton on behalf of the Government. This immediately led to active private buying on all accounts, which considerably alleviated the situation. A further amendment resulted from the postponement of the last instalment of the land-tax.

It was unfortunate that, during the early days of the War, when enemy and Turkish propaganda was having a not inconsiderable effect in the cities of Egypt, the administration should have shown itself hesitant rather than firm in its treatment of enemy aliens. Prompt action in this regard might have prevented the appearance of symptoms which undoubtedly embarrassed the Government in August. But fortunately wiser counsels soon prevailed, and over seven hundred enemy aliens were deported to Malta, together with a number of Turks and Egyptians known to be engaged in subversive activities.

By the middle of October the position of affairs was such that both the British Agent and the Prime Minister Regent could congratulate themselves. The economic difficulties had been, or were, in process of being surmounted: if not contented, the country was at least not seriously ruffled, and accepted the orders of the Government without much questioning. Fortified by this experience, it was decided to suspend the activities of the Legislative Assembly, which was due to hold its next session in November. A decree to that effect was published on October 18, and was shortly followed by an order declaring all public meetings illegal. The Council of Ministers could not perhaps be blamed for a disinclination to face the Assembly at such a juncture. The lesson of its previous sitting had gone deep.

It was now clear, moreover, that war with Turkey could not long delay. That country had infringed the

bounds of neutrality so frequently and so grossly that there was no longer any hope of maintaining diplomatic relations: more than that, there was considerable risk in so doing, for the Turkish effective forces had been doubled since the previous August, and Turkish troops had been concentrated in Syria, and preparing for an active campaign. The most difficult and by far the most important question would shortly have to be answered. What steps were to be taken to define the position of Egypt when hostilities with Turkey began?

It will be as well at this stage to recapitulate briefly the salient facts in regard to our position in Egypt as it then existed. It was a situation which was practically strong, but legally extremely weak. Its practical basis was the British Army of Occupation, now strengthened by the addition of the Imperial Forces which would be necessary to guard against invasion. In time of war this practical strength was enormously increased by British control of the seas, which made it possible, if necessary, to isolate the country for purposes of commerce. These facts constituted our immediate claim to a voice in the direction of Egyptian affairs—our representatives and our officials derived an authority which was all-sufficient from the presence of British troops. In its legal aspect, however, the case was very different. Constitutionally the ruler of Egypt was the Khedive, and the Council of Ministers were his advisers: the British Consul-General had no place in the Constitution and no powers were reserved to him by any treaty or engagement entered into between the two countries: the British officials were legally nothing more than servants of the Khedive. There was, however, one limitation upon the power of the Khedive which was universally

recognised in law. This limitation was the overlordship of the Sultan of Turkey, for technically Egypt was a part of the Ottoman Dominions, and the Khedive held office by deed of the Sultan, whose suzerainty he acknowledged.

That we should be exercising so large a measure of direction and control in a country in which we had legally no position at all, could hardly be described as a satisfactory state of affairs from the point of view of the jurist; and, obviously, if we found ourselves at war with Turkey the situation from this point of view would become more chaotic. For all Egyptians, being Ottoman subjects, would find themselves technically enemy subjects in the eyes of Great Britain and her Allies. At first sight it would appear to everyone to be an impossibly ridiculous situation that two countries, one of which had been the "guide, philosopher, and friend" of the other through more than thirty peaceful years, should, by no action and no desire of their own, find themselves at war with one another. Hostile action by Turkey seemed, therefore, to provide not only an opportunity but a compulsion to clear up the legal situation and import some measure of definition and of logic into our position in Egypt. Moreover, although in August and September 1914 there was no telling what the issue of the War would be, or how soon the end would come, certainly the events of those months did not lead the observer to foresee a struggle so interminably drawn out, or to apprehend the immense revolution in ideas and circumstances that was to take place before the final settlement could be accomplished. "Self-determination" and similar tyrannical slogans were still uncoined, and it must have appeared essential to make it clear to the world as soon as possible that Egypt

was the concern of Great Britain alone, and that the *status quo* was not capable of being tampered with.

Starting, therefore, from the assumption that some step must inevitably be taken, in the event of war with Turkey, towards definition of our relation with Egypt—starting from this apparently unquestioned assumption, the British authorities in Egypt advocated from the very outset that such a step should take the form of declaring a British Protectorate over Egypt. A British Protectorate, they argued, would be the natural sequence, unassailably logical, of Cromer's policy. That policy had always aimed at maintaining Egyptian hands in control of the reins of Government, with British brains in the background to advise, encourage, or restrain, as need might dictate. The protectorate was, therefore, a natural development, which would involve no change of British policy and would be comprehended without difficulty by Egyptians. It would have, moreover, the immense advantage of inflicting no wound upon the national *amour-propre*. The existence of an independent Egyptian ruler was a matter of intense pride to them. The Khedive of Egypt sat in his own palace as the head of the Egyptian State: to him representatives of the nations of the civilised world were accredited. From him the Consuls-General of even the foremost Powers must seek audience. The formalities to be gone through, the precedence and the dignities received and accorded, were exactly the same as obtained in Rome or in London. The sovereign independence of the Egyptian State was daily demonstrated and daily acclaimed with gratification by a sensitive people. The authorities in Egypt, therefore, felt themselves upon strong ground in arguing that if any step were taken, that step should

be the declaration of a protectorate. Early in September, Mr. Cheetham, as Acting Consul-General, advised the Secretary of State in this sense.<sup>1</sup> And, by return of post, or rather, of telegram, the Secretary of State accepted his advice.<sup>2</sup> From the issue of that despatch right on until early in the month of November, correspondence upon the subject, which was voluminous, between Mr. Cheetham and Sir Edward Grey, was concerned with the terms of the various proclamations to be issued.<sup>3</sup> Mr. Cheetham and his colleagues in Egypt were full of anxieties on this score and on that. They feared that, in the event of war with Turkey, religious feeling would show itself in action hostile to Great Britain.<sup>4</sup> They feared that Prince Hussein, whom it was proposed to appoint to the throne in the place of Abbas Hilmi, would not accept the position unless a large measure of Egyptian autonomy were publicly guaranteed.<sup>5</sup> They feared that without a guarantee of this nature the Prime Minister and his colleagues would refuse to remain in office.<sup>6</sup> And, most seriously of all, they feared and shrank from the task of administering Egypt without the assistance of Egyptian Ministers. All these fears were duly reported to the Secretary of State, who could hardly have been blamed if he had blenched in

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, September 10, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Sir E. Grey to Mr. Cheetham, September 11, 1914.

<sup>3</sup> F.O. Despatches: *passim*, September and October 1914.

<sup>4</sup> Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, September 10, 1914, and November 18, 1914. It is interesting to compare the views on the religious elements here expressed with the following sentence in a private letter from Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, dated September 1, 1914. "It [the Turkish danger] has curiously enough produced a current of opinion in our favour, as everybody dreads the arrival of the Turk." Cf. also F.O. Despatch: Cairo, September 7, 1914: "If we can assist them to sell a portion of their crop, I believe that even in the event of a Turkish attack, the country population will remain absolutely tranquil and sympathetic."

<sup>5</sup> Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, November 1, 1914.

<sup>6</sup> Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, October 30, 1914.

the face of such a formidable array of dangers. At any rate the reports led to considerable modification in the proclamations which were being prepared for issue in the event of war with Turkey. The proclamation of a protectorate was now to contain, or be accompanied by, a promise of some "compensation" to Egypt in the event of a break with Turkey. The proclamation of martial law was at the last minute amplified, because the Prime Minister threatened to resign.<sup>1</sup> A further reason for grave anxiety was duly communicated to the Secretary of State, contained in a report, from the Adviser of the Interior, that the state of public feeling had undergone a rapid change for the worse owing to the difficulty of disposing of the cotton crop.<sup>2</sup> Finally, on November 2, with war with Turkey now certain, martial law was proclaimed: and it might have been expected that the measures, so long discussed and decided upon against that event, would be put into force. Indeed, on November 6, the Secretary of State telegraphed to Mr. Cheetham: "I approve the arrangements made. I think you and the General Officer commanding are handling the situation with judgment and skill." What sudden intervention was it, then, that caused him, only a few days later, to inform Mr. Cheetham that the Cabinet had now decided upon annexation?<sup>3</sup> When we read in the despatches that the agreement of the French Government to the step was sought and obtained without waiting for Mr. Cheetham's comments,<sup>4</sup> we can only infer that the decision was deliberate and definite. When we read, on the other hand, that, as soon as Mr. Cheetham advised against

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, November 5, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, October 26, 1914.

<sup>3</sup> Sir E. Grey to Mr. Cheetham, November 13, 1914.

<sup>4</sup> Sir F. Bertie to Sir E. Grey, November 19, 1914.

it, the Secretary of State discarded it, without further discussion,<sup>1</sup> we can only infer that it was tentative and ill-digested. The picture of Whitehall disclosed by the official despatches is, in fact, bewildering to a degree—a picture of violent and purposeless oscillation that inevitably suggests a panic instability. The British authorities in Egypt now showed no signs of a kindred restlessness. Mr. Cheetham's despatch, written after consulting with Sir John Maxwell and others of his colleagues, was very strongly opposed to annexation. He marshalled again all the arguments to which reference has been made above, pointed out that our fixed policy dictated the simultaneous preservation both of British control and of Egyptian independent nationality, and concluded as follows:

“To these immediate considerations I would add that the existing system of governing through native hands is not the most efficient form of Government, but it is understood here and provides an excuse for administrative shortcomings which would disappear with annexation. Annexation must involve a more direct responsibility for Great Britain, for a higher standard of Government, and for stricter protection of foreign interests. This would ultimately be attained, but only by free displacement of native officials. Although increased efficiency might be appreciated, an influential class of malcontents would be created.”<sup>2</sup>

His arguments again prevailed and annexation finally surrendered to a protectorate. It was a curious decision and arrived at by curious processes of thought. Two perfectly direct and unambiguous courses were open to the British Government. The

<sup>1</sup> Sir E. Grey to Mr. Cheetham, November 19, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, November 18, 1914.



first was to maintain the *status quo* entirely unchanged, and the second was to take over from our enemy, Turkey, the suzerainty over Egypt which had long been ours in practice, and was now legally ours by right of conquest—in other words, to annex Egypt. The first of these courses was never even discussed at the time—it was apparently thought impossible to leave Egypt in the position of a former Turkish dependency which now as a result of war was in the hands of Great Britain. Yet this course had the advantage of according so exactly with facts, past and present, that it could not have been challenged by anyone, and no possible grounds would have been given for suspecting the honesty of purpose of those who took it. In such a position there would have been undeniable advantages.

The second direct course, that of annexation, would have avoided the difficulty of leaving Egypt in an indeterminate status. It would have settled this problem out of hand by making her beyond any doubt a part of the British Empire.

The course chosen was neither of these direct and unambiguous courses, but the indirect and extremely ambiguous compromise of a protectorate. This compromise was adopted in order that Egypt should not be left without a status, but the status which it gave her was one which nobody could understand, so indefinite that it gave rise to an insoluble conflict of opinion. It was chosen as an alternative to annexation, but while it certainly brought none of the advantages of annexation, it was attacked and criticised for just the same reasons as annexation would have been attacked, and with greater justification.

Martial law was, as we have seen, proclaimed on November 2, 1914, and in deference to the threats

and entreaties of the Prime Minister Regent, it was followed by a second proclamation issued by the G.O.C. and designed expressly to soften the grim outlines of a state of war. The two proclamations had the effect of relieving the Prime Minister and Prince Hussein of a large share of their anxieties. With martial law the responsibility for a great many unpleasantnesses would be transferred from civil to military shoulders, and they could, therefore, face the future more cheerfully. The second proclamation also contained a promise which was positively startling in its generosity. It unequivocally declared that Great Britain took upon herself the sole burden of prosecuting the War without calling upon the Egyptian people for aid, and merely required them to refrain from assisting the enemy.

It was Mr. Cheetham who first suggested that the declaration should first contain an announcement of this policy. On September 10, 1914, he forwarded to the Secretary of State a draft "preamble of Proclamation of War with Turkey", which contained this paragraph: "Great Britain accepts fullest responsibility for defence of Egypt against aggression". This suggestion was accepted without discussion by the Secretary of State, and the matter was finally clinched when, on November 5, 1914, Mr. Cheetham telegraphed again:

"As a result of further discussion Regent has agreed to remain in office with his colleagues on the receipt of an official note from myself, communicating to His Excellency a copy of a short proclamation by the G.O.C., announcing state of war with Turkey, undertaking entire responsibility for defence of the country and requiring population not to aid the enemy. Regent will reply that Council of Ministers

will be responsible for administration of Civil Service."

However much one may endeavour to excuse this disastrous decision, it is impossible to escape the conclusion that its motive was a fear which disproportionately minimised all other considerations. The dangers which might result from the declaration of martial law had been magnified to such an extent that it was suddenly felt essential to buy them off. The Prime Minister's threatened resignation and the hostility of the religious element had come to be regarded as disastrous eventualities. The promise that was made as a result was fantastically sweeping, and a little forethought would have revealed that it was almost certainly impossible to abide by. In point of fact, it was departed from within a few days, when Egyptian units were summoned to take part in the Canal defence scheme. If genuine reasons, of which the record has since been lost, existed at the time, making it unwise to count upon the assistance of Egypt, at least we surely need not have debarred ourselves from the chance of inviting their co-operation later on or have refused in advance an offer which it was always possible they might make to us. By such action we rushed to isolate Egypt from the rest of the Empire and cut her off from that comradeship in arms which was to prove such an enduring and beneficial bond. The decision was, no doubt, taken out of regard for the religious and Ottoman sentiments with which Egyptians were credited, but it entirely disregarded their national self-respect, as to which they were at least equally sensitive. The Egyptian Army was ridiculous if it did not exist to fight: and what better ground could it have for fighting than the defence of the country against invasion? The proclamation was a grievous

error, the effects of which were felt at constant intervals throughout the War, and more seriously still in the months after the Armistice.

The immediate effect was, of course, negative, and the authorities were therefore encouraged. But it was not until two months afterwards, on December 18, that they made public their decision to proclaim a protectorate. The hesitancies of the Prime Minister had been overcome: in view of the existence of martial law he was ready to remain in office, and his Cabinet were of the same mind. They were comfortably relieved of a great deal of responsibility, and could enjoy the sweets of office in the assurance that they could shift to British shoulders the blame for any unpopular happening.

On the following day it was officially announced that H.H. Abbas Hilmi II. was no longer Khedive, and that the ruling position had been offered to and accepted by Prince Hussein Kamil, with the title of Sultan. Hussein was the eldest living male of the family of the illustrious Mehemet Ali. More than that, as a large landowner who carried out his duties in an exemplary manner, he had achieved wide popularity with the masses: and his probity and courage had earned for him the respect of all classes and communities. The choice was therefore a sound one, and it was entirely justified.

Equally justifiable was the deposition of Abbas Hilmi. Cromer has left on record a picture of that ruler which leaves little to be said in his favour. He credits him with only one generous action, when he hastened incognito to England to the death-bed of Gorst. But he is known also to have possessed an attractive personality, which seldom failed to exercise its fascination. His personal power among his subjects

was great, and was enhanced by the traditional prestige which attached to his position.

These are invaluable assets in a ruler. How did Abbas Hilmi make use of them during the years in which he held the sceptre of Egypt? As we have seen, there was a strong school of criticism which held that he was the real stumbling-block in the path of all efforts at co-operation between the best elements in Egypt and the British authorities. These critics could point at many incidences of intrigue between the palace and the disruptive elements in Egypt: they could dwell upon the scandals which from time immemorial had attached to the administration of the department of Waqfs, and to the distribution of grades and decorations: and they finally pointed a triumphant, if unjust, finger at his failure to leave Turkey and return to Egypt when Great Britain and Turkey were clearly coming to an open breach. There was another school, however, which held that he might have been saved from the temptations which confronted him, had he been more carefully nursed by the British authorities in the early days of his rule. What is certain is that most intelligent and reasonable Egyptians believed that he was opposed to their schemes for the country's progress, and were therefore openly hostile to him. In spite of the ascendancy he had obtained, little real affection was felt for him, and his deposition aroused no feeling in the country.

Nor indeed did the declaration of a protectorate. To all appearances the change was placidly accepted. And it was, in sober truth, an uninspiring business. Those in authority claimed with satisfaction that the results were good, but the future was, unfortunately, hidden from them, and they were anxiously pre-

occupied with a present that seemed to them to be fraught with immense possibilities of danger. In such bewildering circumstances, they could only strive to carry on the traditional policy of Great Britain in Egypt, and to adapt it as far as possible to urgent and ever-changing needs.

Sir Valentine Chirol<sup>1</sup> has drawn an illuminating comparison between what was done in Egypt and in India during the War. And although, as he points out, much that was possible in India was impossible in Egypt, the difference in our treatment of the two countries was undeniably wide. It is, perhaps, not unjust to conclude that in the case of Egypt diplomatic considerations had too much weight attached to them. At any rate there was convincing proof of this in the Note, explanatory of the Proclamation, which was addressed to the new Sultan. It was drawn up conformably to diplomatic canons, but in that form it made no appeal to the masses of Egypt, and was hardly intelligible to them. Their natural inference was that their country was being treated as little more than a counter in the diplomatic game.

It is no doubt easy in the light of our present knowledge to criticise the decisions come to at the outset of men in Egypt. Before, then, we turn to consider the declaration in detail and with it the several courses which it was open to us to take at that time, it is well to try and recapture for a moment, if we may, something of the atmosphere which surrounded our officials in those momentous days, and to recall the complex uncertainty of the problems they had to face. All the considerations which would have been given due weight in normal and

<sup>1</sup> Sir Valentine Chirol, *The Egyptian Problem*, p. 127 *et seq.*

peaceful times now receded into the background before the overwhelming necessities of a state of war. Dangers which were ordinarily regarded as remote were now thrust into the foreground and the attempt to forearm against each possibility inevitably gave to each an imminence greater than it possessed in reality. In Egypt such possibilities were many and varied. Pan-Turanianism, Pan-Islamism, German propaganda all loomed larger than usual. These problems had connections with each other which made them in appearance more formidable still. They required to be viewed in a perspective which embraced the whole of Western Asia, and it was unfortunate that the guardians of Egypt had a horizon which seemed often to be bounded on one side by a training in European diplomacy, and on another by an experience which embraced little more of Asia than the Mediterranean and Red Sea littorals. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico* is a true saying. The dangers with which we were faced were magnified not only by the false perspective of war, but also by an incomplete knowledge.

## CHAPTER XIV

1914. THE DECLARATION OF THE PROTECTORATE:

1915. EXIGENCIES OF A STATE OF WAR

THE explanatory Note<sup>1</sup> addressed to Sultan Hussein under the orders of His Majesty's Government was intended to be a full and detailed exposition of the policy and intention which underlay the declaration of a protectorate. It merits, therefore, a close examination, being, as it was, the final outcome of anxious and prolonged discussion. It began by reciting the hostile acts which had been committed by Turkey against the Allies, and it went on to state tersely that the Khedive Abbas II. had thrown in his lot with the enemies of His Majesty. Then followed this pregnant sentence:

"From the facts above set out it results that the rights over the Egyptian Executive, whether of the Sultan, or of the late Khedive, are forfeited to His Majesty."

"The rights", let it be noted, both of Sultan and Khedive—all constitutional rights, therefore, of government in Egypt: and these were not simply "forfeited" but quite definitely "forfeited to His Majesty". The right of conquest, "ancient and easy to understand", as Lord Salisbury had described it,

<sup>1</sup> *Journal officiel*, December 19, 1914: *vide* Appendix B.



had given us full legal power to dispose as we wished of the future of Egypt. Possessing now both the rights of the suzerain power and the rights of the *de jure* ruler, we had a basis from which we might legally proceed to make any change we pleased in the constitution.

The Note then went on to state that His Majesty's Government had decided that the best method of exercising the responsibilities thus devolving upon them was to declare a British Protectorate over Egypt, under which the country would be governed by a Prince of the Khedivial family. So far, therefore, our policy was to remain as it had always been, in the direct succession to that founded by Cromer. The goal envisaged was the same that had been before us for thirty years: the maintenance of British control and the gradual development under that control of self-governing institutions; nothing more and nothing less. Turkish suzerainty was wiped out, and in its place was substituted incorporation in the British Empire. That this was the intention was perfectly clear from the current despatches. Mr. Cheetham had written to Sir Edward Grey: "The certain knowledge that it was the intention of His Majesty's Government to treat Egypt as part of the British Empire . . . would make us sure of the loyalty of our friends, and of the acquiescence of the numerous officials".<sup>1</sup> And, again, that the idea underlying the protectorate was "inclusion in the British Empire without loss of Egyptian individuality".<sup>2</sup> But as to this, it must here be pointed out that there was one all-important point which appears to have escaped notice at the time: and this oversight was later to

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, September 10, 1914.

<sup>2</sup> Mr. Cheetham to Sir E. Grey, November 18, 1914.

prove disastrously important. It had previously been understood and accepted that protectorates over all but quite uncivilised countries had as their basis an agreement jointly subscribed to by Protector and Protected.<sup>1</sup> But the British Government, either carelessly or wilfully, disregarded the implications of this usage, and made a unilateral declaration that the status of Egypt was to be a status which would only arise out of bilateral agreement. The legality of our position in Egypt remained, therefore, still assailable, should the inclination to assail it ever arise.

The Note, which had started so well, showed a deterioration at this point, and it went on immediately to deteriorate further still, for it next stated that the foreign relations of the Egyptian Government were henceforth to be conducted through His Majesty's representative at Cairo. The whole protectorate policy was based upon the theory that it was essential to maintain the appearance of Egyptian independence, and here was a decision which at once and in a very marked degree diminished not only the appearance but the reality of that independence. It is, of course, true that the step was logically inevitable, a necessary concomitant of the new relationship. But this did not make it any more palatable to Egyptians: it merely showed that, in one important direction at any rate, the protectorate was open to just the same criticisms as its sponsors had been bringing against annexation. It wounded Egyptian pride in one of its most sensitive parts. If the succeeding paragraphs were intended to soften the sharpness of this blow, any effect they might have had in this direction was more than counterbalanced by the vagueness of their phrasing. The Note proceeded to condemn the

<sup>1</sup> Instances are numerous—viz. Zanzibar, Tunis, Morocco.

Capitulations as no longer in harmony with the development of the country, and then made reference to the internal situation in a paragraph which, while it foreshadowed no definite change in the existing situation, yet indulged in the parade of vague intentions in regard to liberty and education and, most important of all, in regard to associating the governed in the task of government. Even now, in spite of several bitter lessons, we are still fatally addicted to the public expression of vaguely benevolent intentions. We can never learn, it seems, that such expressions in the long run engender nothing but bitterness and unhappiness. In this, as in so many other cases, we intended merely to assert the general friendliness of our attitude and our intention to make no change in the general outline of our policy. But, unfortunately, the phrases we used were capable of being interpreted as meaning much more than this, and it was not long before such interpretations were publicly made. The following sentence occurred in the body of the Note. His Majesty's Government were "convinced that the clearer definition of Great Britain's position in the country will accelerate the progress towards self-government". It can only be supposed that this sentence meant that, under a British Protectorate, the extinction of the Capitulations might more confidently be anticipated. The new Sultan, however, seized at once upon this phrase, and, in accepting the position offered to him, expressed his definite wish to associate the people more and more closely with the government of the country, and stated that the "more precise definition of Great Britain's position in Egypt, by removing all causes of misunderstanding, will facilitate the collaboration of all the political elements in the country". Interpreta-

tion was beginning already, and with attempts at interpretation could only come an increase of misunderstanding and bitterness. The immense variety of possible interpretations, while fraught with every kind of future danger, was probably at the time one of the chief reasons why Egyptians accepted the protectorate so calmly. For them all these vague phrases were in the nature of post-dated cheques which could not be presented until the War was over. Meanwhile, however little the position appeared to be altered for the better, they could console themselves by building upon the vaguest possible foundations every kind of hope for the future.

It would, perhaps, be interesting to endeavour at this point to assess as far as possible the comparative merits of the three courses which were open to the British Government at this time. As we have seen, only two of these courses had come under discussion—Annexation and Protectorate: the third course of making no declared change had never been suggested. From annexation there were certain obvious advantages to be derived. The two great difficulties with which we had constantly had to contend in Egypt were the Capitulations, and the harassing anomalies of an undefined position. The former constituted a serious impediment to the legislative and executive activity of the Egyptian Government; the latter constantly diminished our power of promoting the welfare of the masses, and consequently our prestige and reputation. If Egypt were annexed by Great Britain, both these difficulties would disappear at once. Moreover, there was clear legal justification for the step in the state of war with Turkey, as a result of which Egypt, which had previously been part of the Ottoman Empire, would now by right

of conquest become part of the British Empire. That Egypt should become part of our Empire was a natural sequence from the events of the last twenty years, and a logical evolution of our policy. There were, it is true, local risks involved in taking such a step, but they were reduced to a minimum by the strength of our forces in Egypt and by her need of our protection. Was it not better then to take the step openly and to face the risks?

The arguments in favour of a protectorate were less direct. Its supporters began by establishing a case against annexation as a step which, by its high-handedness, would alienate neutral sympathy and estrange even our friends in Egypt. A protectorate, they argued, would maintain the individual status of Egypt, and therefore would not offend Egyptian opinion: it would have a less drastic appearance than annexation and therefore would not provoke foreign criticism: and finally it would result for all practical purposes in the incorporation of Egypt into the British Empire. It was therefore, they argued, exactly in conformity with Cromer's methods and policy. Its positive advantages, however, were much less definite. If it did not entirely remove the necessity for capitulatory privileges, if it did not give the British representative a very definite position, it at least made it easier to negotiate for the extinction of Capitulations, and at least gave the British High Commissioner a legal position distinct from and superior to that of the representatives of other foreign Powers. It also avoided wounding Egyptian *amour-propre*, and at the same time secured at least a semblance of incorporation in the British Empire.

Those who sponsored the policy clearly cannot be blamed for not foreseeing that, with the revolution of

circumstance brought about by the War, the protectorate would, in point of fact, secure permanently none even of these very qualified advantages. But, even in 1914, it must have been apparent that the protectorate policy was essentially a negative policy. It removed none of the major difficulties which existed, and brought only the minimum of advantages. Born out of a desire to prevent annexation, it only modified and did not avoid the dangers which were feared from annexation. We were, though we did not know it at the time, about to govern Egypt, not through Sultan and Ministers but by martial law. And in practice martial law was hardly distinguishable from annexation. Meanwhile, the legality of our position in Egypt remained fundamentally only a little less dubious than it had always been: the powers and functions of the Consul-General, now High Commissioner, remained only a little less indefinite and uncertain: the position of the British Advisers was just as irritatingly anomalous: and the privileges accorded by the Capitulations remained in foreign eyes just as essential as ever. In fact, the policy was built upon negative arguments. Its basis was a desire to adhere to previous policy and to avoid the dangers which were foreseen in change. But all these arguments, if they had any force at all, were arguments which pointed most strongly, not to a protectorate, but to no change at all. If no change had been made, all—and not only some—of the possibilities of wounding Egyptian *amour-propre* and arousing national hostility would have been avoided. All danger of misinterpretation and misunderstanding would have been escaped, because no declaration of future intentions would have been necessary. As far as the immediate situation was concerned, the

outlook was excellent as it was: the dangers of a serious economic crisis had been averted: the measures necessitated by the War had given rise to no agitation: public opinion was calm: and our position in Egypt was fully strong. Early in August the Egyptian Government had officially abandoned strict neutrality, and the same compulsion which had secured that decision would obviously operate as effectively when Turkey came into the War. We had already made the serious mistake of promising not to call upon Egypt for active help in the prosecution of the War, and martial law had already been declared. All that remained to be done was to declare the Khedive to have forfeited his rights, and to appoint a ruler in his place. Turkish suzerainty had for long been practically in abeyance, and would now, in a state of war, definitely lapse. Egypt had for long been practically recognised, and would still continue to be recognised, as under British protection. Judging in the light of after events, it seems difficult not to conclude that the real choice should have lain, not between annexation and protectorate, but between annexation and a continuance, without public declarations of any kind, of the existing state of affairs. Annexation would have brought advantages of very great value, but it would also have been accompanied by risks. Looking back over the years, there is a strong inclination to feel that the risks would have been worth taking. Unfortunately, it was concluded that the risks were too obvious and too great. The policy which was actually adopted bears the appearance, even in the despatches which passed at the time, of having been a bloodless compromise evolved in a defensive atmosphere: and its results, whether predictable or not, were the results which almost

invariably follow upon compromises dictated by such motives.

For the present, however, it was now clear that things were to go on just as they were, with Egypt under martial law, and her defence in the hands of Great Britain. Upon these terms Hussein Rushdi Pasha and his colleagues accepted the Sultan's invitation to remain in office. And soon afterwards Sir Henry MacMahon arrived to take up the duties of High Commissioner, as the British Agent was henceforth to be called.

Sir Henry MacMahon had gained his administrative experience in India, where, after a distinguished career, he had risen to the post of Political Secretary to the Government at Simla. His ability was undoubtedly great, but in the hurry and bustle of war-time administration he would have little or no leisure to study Egypt's problems and acquire an intimate knowledge of Egyptians. He would have perforce to put himself into the hands of his advisers, and it would be difficult for the Residency to keep closely in touch with public opinion.

In any case the task of civil administration was now to become increasingly complex. In the ambiguous position previously existing, and only prolonged by the declaration of a protectorate, the division of responsibility between British Advisers and Egyptian Ministers had been vague enough. The vagueness was now to be added to by the existence of martial law, and by the arrival in Egypt of the various Imperial Forces, whose increasing numbers were soon to turn Egypt into a gigantic camp.

In August 1914 the units of the Army of Occupation had been withdrawn to France, and replaced by a Territorial Division. Later in the year arrived the



first units of the Australian Imperial Force, which disembarked in Egypt to undergo training. Two Divisions of the Indian Army also came to supplement the forces in Egypt. And to these latter was allotted the task of defending the Canal against the Turkish attack now impending. The attack was realised to be imminent in January of 1915, and was actually delivered and repulsed on February 3 and 4. It is not within the purview of this book to give any detached description of the military operations which were carried out from the Egyptian base. Enough has been written in previous pages to show that these operations belong properly to the history of Great Britain and not of Egypt. Only where the story of Egypt is seriously affected by military events will any close description of those events be attempted.

The armed forces of the Empire soon began to arrive in Egypt in greater numbers still. Early in 1915 Alexandria was made the basis of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, which, under Sir Ian Hamilton, was to attempt the capture of Gallipoli. Units of this force were also stationed at Cairo, and after the end of April hospitals were being organised throughout the country to deal with the constant stream of sick and wounded. In this work of preparing for the care of the sick the Egyptian Government co-operated very generously. They placed a number of buildings at the disposal of the Army Medical authorities, and the Public Health Department offered the assistance of stores and personnel.

It is impossible to avoid, at this stage, some reference to the relations between the members of the fighting forces then in Egypt and the civil population. Allegations have been freely made which asperse the behaviour of the troops and lay upon them a con-

siderable portion of the blame for the ill-feeling which later showed itself. It cannot be too definitely asserted that such a view of the situation is entirely unfair to the fighting forces. Whatever else may be in dispute in regard to the conduct of the War in all theatres, this one fact is admitted by all observers to be true, that the British soldier, whenever brought into contact with the civil population in the theatres of combat, succeeded unfailingly in securing their respect and affection, and that his good humour, his tolerance and ready sense of justice, were factors which contributed most largely to the creation of a peaceful and orderly atmosphere. If this result was not so fully obtained in Egypt, the blame for it must be laid elsewhere. Egyptians were not fighting side by side with the rest of the Empire, and so could not be, and indeed were not, regarded as comrades-in-arms, as were the Indians and other Colonial troops. They had been under our protection for many years and their territory was threatened with the rigours of invasion, not by the Allies, but by the Turks: they would not, therefore, be regarded in the same light as were the populations of Syria, or Palestine, or Mesopotamia. The policy followed by His Majesty's Government had placed the Egyptians in an equivocal position, in which it was inevitable that they should be regarded by the troops as a people who were both profiting by and profiteering out of the sacrifices and sufferings of our own men. It is asserted by Egyptians that the Sultan Hussein and his cabinet offered to Great Britain the services of the Egyptian Army, but while there are good grounds for believing the truth of the assertion, there is no official record that such an offer was made. Had it been even informally advanced, it is hardly credible that the British

authorities could have been so unwise as to refuse it. To reject such an offer—even to refrain from appealing for military aid from Egypt—was tantamount to asserting that we regarded her attitude as fundamentally hostile, and the help she could give us as negligible. At any rate the troops, unaware of the intricacies of our problem and policy, were quick to draw the inference, and based their attitude upon it.

And Egypt was now being overwhelmed by troops. To the "Force in Egypt" and the "Canal Defence Force" had been added the Base organisation of the "Mediterranean Expeditionary Force". Hard upon this addition there followed the "Levant Base" to control and co-ordinate the supply and transport services of the Forces operating in the Near East. The temper of the Egyptians was not improved by this wholesale use of their territory for purposes which, in their view, only indirectly concerned them.

It may well have been emotions thus inflamed that led to the attempts made during the summer of 1915 upon the life of the Sultan. Hussein was generally and deservedly popular, but among the student class of Egypt there are always to be found too many unbalanced and undisciplined spirits who see all in high places as traitors to their country, and seek to gain notoriety by perpetrating what they regard as an act of vengeance.

Indeed at this time Egypt had little material ground for complaint. General Maxwell's administration of martial law had been always careful and conciliatory, and in many instances directly beneficial. His knowledge of Egypt was profound, and it was of great assistance to him that he had been long known to, and popular among, Egyptian society. He used his present powers in a manner that greatly increased

that popularity. By degrees under martial law he delivered Egypt from that scourge of adulterated liquor from which she had long been suffering helplessly. The traffic in such liquor had been flourishing in many towns, and the Egyptian Government were, because of the Capitulations, powerless to prevent it. Under martial law it was possible to authorise entry without Consular authority upon suspected premises, and to improve deterrent penalties—even to prohibit absolutely the sale or possession of absinthe.

It was also possible now to amend another grievance which Egyptian opinion had much resented and had regarded as due to the Capitulations. By a Proclamation, dated September 23, 1915, General Maxwell directed that every inhabitant, European or Egyptian, should henceforward pay his share of the Ghaffir tax. Even in cases where it was necessary to put the needs of the Army as more important than purely Egyptian interests, General Maxwell found it possible to arrange matters without causing friction or discontent. In the summer of 1915 a situation somewhat alarming to the Egyptian Government arose, in which stocks of primary products were being held off the market against an expected rise in prices. The Government were assisted in their predicament by a decree of the G.O.C. forbidding the accumulation of food supplies. In return for this timely aid, the Ministry of Agriculture came to the aid of the Army Supply authorities, and by fixing fair prices, and appointing official buying agents, succeeded in arranging for the release of the stocks which the Army required.

The Council of Ministers were not perhaps so happy in their operations at this period. They had

been much assisted in their difficulties by a harvest which, though somewhat below the average in yield of wheat, barley, and beans, had produced a bumper crop of maize. This fact, coupled with the restrictions imposed upon export and upon cotton-planting in 1914, had rendered temporarily secure the supply of cereals which the country demanded. Prudence dictated, in view of the uncertainty of the future, that efforts should now be made to accumulate a reserve. On the other hand, the agriculturists, with an eye only to their own profits, were loudly demanding the removal of all restrictions. There were signs of an upward tendency in world prices of primary products, and particularly in the price of cotton. Anxious to profit by this movement, the landowning classes fiercely attacked the restrictions, and the Government, landowners themselves, gave way almost without a struggle. In April and May all restrictions upon the export of maize, beans, and wheat were removed. In September the most foolish step of all was taken, and the decree limiting the area to be planted with cotton was cancelled. From one point of view it was possible to describe this action as disinterested. The Allied Powers were badly in need of all the supplies of cotton that could be procured, and it was to their interest that the food supplies of Egypt should be neglected in favour of cotton-growing. But it is undoubtedly true here that the guiding consideration for the Egyptian Ministers was the pressure brought to bear by the large landowners, whose only thought was their own personal interest.

From all this it is clear that the material condition of the country was good at the moment, and showed many symptoms of future improvement, while

martial law was proving beneficial rather than oppressive, and the danger of invasion had been completely allayed, if indeed it had ever seriously threatened.

But always on the horizon was looming the cloud of military exigency. The evacuation of Gallipoli was destined to pour another horde of troops into Egypt, and the decision to advance across the Sinai Desert, and into Palestine, was to keep them there till the end of the War. To the requirements of this great army Egypt might have to minister. Her able-bodied workers would be needed to labour upon its communications, her draught and pack animals would be coveted to supply transport for its supplies: even her fodder would be wanted to feed its beasts of burden. Was there any hope that Egypt would escape from the accumulated pressure of these urgent needs? Or that the promise so unnecessarily made in 1914 would be kept in spirit if not in letter? Hitherto the interests of Egypt had been given consideration. She was lucky in having at the head of the military forces in the country a soldier who knew her people well, and their needs and their temper. And until the end of 1915 also the forces occupying her territory had not reached those unwieldy dimensions which the next year was to see. But the gulf which in 1919 was to prove unbridgeable was already a perceptible fissure, and at any moment it might widen dangerously.

Looking back from the point of vantage reached ten years later, it is curious to find that at this critical point the High Commissioner was despatching to the Secretary of State detailed drafts of the Convention, the legislation, and the decrees which, in his opinion, would be necessary to secure the abrogation of the

Capitulations. So revolutionary a change had already taken place in the world situation, that an effort is necessary to carry back the mind to the problems of pre-War Egypt. These drafts had been asked for by the Secretary of State in 1913, but Kitchener had, perhaps typically, supplied instead, in July 1914, a long report upon the measures which would be necessary to replace the Capitulations. The Secretary of State was not satisfied, and in October 1915 Sir Henry MacMahon complied with his original request. Much water had flowed under the bridges since that request was made, and much was still to flow before any action could be taken on the report. And meanwhile the seeds were about to be sown in Egypt from which would soon grow a problem of far more terrible dimensions than any presented by the Capitulations.

## CHAPTER XV

### 1916. DEMANDS OF THE ARMY UPON EGYPT

THE early months of the year 1916 saw a steady change in the situation. British war aims began to expand and take on a more ambitious complexion, as far as the Egyptian theatre was concerned: and inevitably the administration of the country was drawn more and more into subordination to military plans. January saw three Army Corps of Imperial troops quartered along the Suez Canal in place of the modest forces which had hitherto been charged with its defence. The evacuation of Gallipoli had taken place in December 1915, and the units withdrawn from that expedition were sent to Egypt for purposes then undisclosed. But though nothing definite was known as to the reasons for this concentration, it was natural to infer that an offensive was contemplated, and the opinion was confirmed by the fact that towards the end of 1915 an "Egyptian Expeditionary Force" had appeared upon the scene, as distinct from the "Force in Egypt". Of the former force General Sir Archibald Murray was appointed Commander-in-Chief, and General Maxwell was left in command of the latter. But although General Murray's Headquarters were moved from Cairo to Ismailia, Egypt still remained a small country, genuinely incapable of



housing comfortably so many armies and so many commanders. It was inevitable that General Maxwell's functions should diminish while those of General Murray expanded: and in March 1916 Sir John Maxwell laid down his command and sailed for England.

His departure marked a definite stage in Egypt's course. Henceforward it seemed clear that military action, in that theatre of which she was the centre, was no longer to be confined mainly to the defence of her territory and of the Suez Canal. Other schemes were on foot: and while their objects would interest her only remotely or not at all, their prosecution would involve large demands upon her resources. In the midst of these anxieties it was a severe blow that General Maxwell, who understood her so well, and was genuinely concerned for her interests, should be leaving her, just when his presence appeared to be most needed.

If Sir John Maxwell had shown himself administrator first and soldier second, the same could not be said of General Murray. His sole aim was the prosecution of the War. He did not desire, unless it was inevitable, to undertake any share of the administration of Egypt: and martial law in his hands was to be solely a weapon of war. This had not been so hitherto. Martial law had been made use of in a number of instances to secure results which benefited Egyptians primarily, and the army only indirectly: the Proclamation of September 23, 1915, directing foreigners to bear their fair share of the Ghaffir tax, is an excellent illustration of the truth of this statement. Even in the Canal zone, during 1914 and 1915, the necessary surveillance of, and restriction upon, the movements of the inhabitants had

been left to the Civil Government, and martial law had not been burdened with this unpopular function. In fact, in all the proclamations issued under martial law, it is difficult to find one which does not in effect work equally for the benefit of the civilian and the military population: and this holds true until we arrive at December 4, 1915, when under the powers given by martial law the State Railways were authorised to take possession of the land necessary in order to double the line from Zagazig to Ismailia. The first order concerned solely with military needs, and subordinating civilian interests thereto, was thus made for the purpose of transporting the new large forces of the E.E.F. from Alexandria to the Canal. And it was not long before others of the same kind followed. The Canal zone almost at once began to be treated as a war area, in which military needs were to overshadow all others. No individual, European or Egyptian, was to be allowed to enter it without a permit. At first, the co-operation of the Civil Government was sought in making the precautionary measure effective, and they undertook the task of investigating applications for permits, and issuing them in deserving cases. When the precaution failed of its object, the military authorities laid the blame on the Civil Government, established their own permit officers in various centres in Egypt, and proceeded considerably to tighten up the restrictions. The civil population now at last began to feel some inconvenience from the state of war: so fortunate had been their previous immunity that the wealthy inhabitants of Cairo conceived they had just ground for complaint at being unable any longer to use Port Said as a holiday resort.

The next step which was taken by the command of

the Expeditionary Force was more far-reaching in its effects. It was decided to advance the lines of defence out into the desert on the eastern side of the Canal. Three lines were to be constructed there, of which the most advanced would be a dozen miles or so distant from the Canal, while only the last line would rest upon the Canal itself. This ambitious defence-work required the construction of many miles of light railway, and of metalled road from the Canal out into the desert, and the organisation of an adequate water supply: and for the two first the resources of the Civil Government of Egypt had to be relied upon entirely.

It also required an immense amount of unskilled labour, an amount so large that the fighting units could not have supplied it without reducing their rifle strength to a level entirely ineffective. In this difficulty, the minds of the military command recalled hopefully that a small Egyptian labour corps had been sent to Mudros in August 1915 at the request of the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force, and had worked there with such conspicuous success that its use had been extended until, at the date of the evacuation, three thousand Egyptian labourers were employed in its ranks. The good work done by this force became so widely known that as early as 1915 demands for Egyptian labour began to come in from other theatres of war, and it was only natural, therefore, that the Egyptian Expeditionary Force should decide to make extensive use of Egyptian labour for purposes nearer home and much more directly designed to serve Egyptian interests. The decision need not necessarily have sowed the seed of trouble: but, unfortunately, the agricultural population of Egypt had no desire to enrol for such service. However good the conditions and the rates of pay,

they could never prove an attraction sufficient to overcome the innate reluctance of the fellah to leave his village—particularly at a time when prices of agricultural produce were rising, and there was plenty of work and money to be had at home. As soon, therefore, as it was decided largely to extend the employment of Egyptian labour, the difficulty of recruiting began, and for its solution there was no alternative to some measure of compulsion. We shall see later what an unfortunate method of compulsion was ultimately employed, and how large a part it played in alienating the feelings of the fellaheen and making them only too ready to listen to the call of the political agitator.

At this stage it is only necessary to point out that no blame can justly be attached to the fellah for his reluctance to serve the Army. He could not be expected to understand that there was a patriotic duty in such service which should appeal to him. Nobody had even suggested to him that his land and home were threatened by the War. The British authorities had in fact gone out of their way to proclaim that the War was no concern of his, and that they were undertaking the whole conduct of it. If patriotism did not call upon Egyptian soldiers to fight, it was very difficult to argue that it called upon Egyptian civilians to dig: the whole proposition was bound to appear to them as purely private and commercial, and in such a light it was not attractive. On the other hand, it is impossible to blame the military authorities for considering only the requirements of the military situation. In their view, the Empire was fighting for its life, and as they understood the matter, Egypt was part of the Empire. There could be no disputing the fact that she was a country under the protection of

Great Britain, whose soil was even now occupied by enemy forces, and whose centre would be in danger of attack from those forces were it not defended by the arms of the Empire. They were, therefore, entitled to demand from the Egyptian authorities exactly the same measure of concentration upon war aims as was being made by every other Government engaged. It was their duty to press their demands with all the energy they could command. How far and in what manner those demands would be complied with was a matter for the civil authorities to decide. Equally in the matter of martial law, their duty was to apply it for the prosecution of war aims. If its application in this manner was a source of inconvenience or suffering to the civil population, it was only what all parts of the Empire were suffering equally, and it was after all a temporary burden only to be endured lest worse might befall.

It might be argued that Egypt was now free from any real danger of a Turkish invasion across the Sinai desert; but the threat still existed, and the Sinai Province was not yet cleared of enemy forces. Even that, indeed, was not the full extent of the danger to be guarded against, for in the winter of 1915-16 the Senussi had invaded Egyptian soil, and the garrison at Sollum had been cut off and forced to surrender. Operations carried out in January and February of 1916 had resulted in a heavy defeat for the Senussi, and the recapture of Sollum, but during the summer of 1916 the danger of raiding incursions continued, and a large British force had to be maintained on the Western frontier as a precaution. The Turks had been inciting, and as far as possible aiding, this attack from the west, and they were also far from inactive in Sinai during the first half of the year. Indeed, they suc-

ceeded in inflicting a considerable reverse upon a British force of Yeomanry in that area.

It was clear, therefore, that Egypt was still a focus of attack. It was clear also that Great Britain was fighting for her life in the most desperate struggle in which she had ever yet been engaged, and that if she were to survive, it would only be by using to the last every resource which she could gather. She must win the War, or perish; and faced with such a mortal struggle, she was little prepared to count in detail the future and indirect cost of actions which seemed at the time to be essential to victory.

Egypt, however, did not now regard herself, and had received at the outbreak of war no encouragement to regard herself, as in any sense really a part of the British Empire. She was prepared not to hamper the British forces which were using her territory for war purposes: she was prepared not to oppose the British war effort, even to give mild assistance. But she felt herself in no danger, and in no sense really involved in the struggle. The two points of view were no longer reconcilable. At the beginning of the War, an attitude of over-caution and timidity had prevented us from making any generous appeal to Egypt to fight beside us; we had even directly encouraged her to adopt the view that the struggle was no real concern of hers. Now under the remorseless pressure of circumstances we were compelled to press for her assistance more and more urgently. When this pressure became intolerable, it was of course open to us to retract our foolish promise of 1914, to tell Egypt frankly that in view of the prolongation and bitterness of the strife we could no longer maintain that promise and must demand her urgent help. But it was in reality too late even for this: the damage

had already been done when Egypt was informed in so many words that the struggle was ours and not hers; and compulsion was now the only alternative to leaving Egypt entirely out of our calculations as a source of auxiliary strength. Clearly it was absolutely impossible for any British official to contemplate this latter alternative when his own country's need was so dire. The War must be won at all costs. The price we have had to pay for victory has been a long one, and the bills have come in from every corner of the world. Hardly anywhere has payment yet been made in full: in many cases, and Egypt is one of them, we do not yet know the extent of the liabilities incurred.

It was difficult also to uphold the case against putting pressure upon Egypt at a time when her resources were so obviously multiplying. Prices were rising rapidly—the demand for cotton was inexhaustible, the supplies of foodstuffs were adequate, and the revenue was outdistancing the expenditure largely. The fellaheen were finding no difficulty in meeting their obligations to the State, and were beginning to be in a position to repay to the banks and money-lenders the loans which had crippled them for so long. Money was coming into the country in large quantities, not only in payment for primary products, but in the pockets of the ever-growing military forces, who spent lavishly in Egypt for three years. If in the light of subsequent events we are now able to detect the cloud that was growing on the horizon, it can hardly have been visible at the time. The military and the civil authorities were still working, at any rate outwardly, in comparative harmony, and except possibly in the Canal zone, martial law was not pressing hardly upon the population.

It was even ready still to operate directly in the

interests of the civil population, and did so conspicuously in the Proclamation of July 7, 1916, which declared the importation and possession of hashish to be offences punishable with severe sentences. It is instructive to note that in all cases in which martial law operated to the benefit of the Egyptian Administration it did so by circumventing the operation of the Capitulations. Abuses which, owing to the existence of the Capitulations, had flourished unchecked for years and poisoned the life of Egypt, were quickly and painlessly removed by military edict. The object lesson thus afforded appears to have been wasted upon Egyptians themselves, and it came too late for the British authorities to profit by it: for they were already committed to a policy which could not lead to any early abrogation of the privileges claimed by foreign Powers.

Nor were the difficulties which were bound sooner or later to arise in regard to recruitment for the Labour Corps, making themselves felt in the early months of the year. The service for which recruitment was invited was not far from home—it was well paid, well fed, not over-burdened and not dangerous. But in this connection the operations which took place in Sinai were of grave importance, however lightly they may have affected the purely military situation. The reverse which was sustained at Katia in April did not occasion any serious danger to the line of defence. A Yeomanry Brigade had been despatched there on April 5 to cover working parties. Occupying such an exposed position it might still have operated successfully had it been allowed the freedom of movement appropriate to cavalry, but it was gravely embarrassed by orders which deprived it of this freedom while affording it none of the com-



munications necessary to a fixed position. The Turks seized this opportunity, delivered a surprise attack, and having inflicted severe casualties, retired again. The most far-reaching result of the engagement arose from the fact that the Labour Corps came under shell-fire and suffered casualties. All sorts of panic rumours were carried back to the villages of Egypt, with the result that all hope of recruiting successfully by voluntary methods was at an end. The attack which the Turks delivered upon the Canal defence lines in July was also of little account from the military point of view, but had its importance in regard to the internal political situation. A fairly large Turkish force advanced from El Arish and attacked the left of the British line between Romani and Kantara. The attack was repulsed without difficulty, and though the Turks made good their retreat, heavy losses were inflicted upon them. The action appears to have marked a turning-point in British strategy. The Egyptian Expeditionary Force was no longer to be content to act on the defensive, but from now onwards it was to become an attacking force, which would follow the historical line of march out of Egypt, and would not stop until the utter collapse of the Turks found it in control of the seaboard route right up to the gates of Asia Minor. In its early stages the advance was to be slow enough, but from the point of view of Egyptian politics what mattered was that the British forces were advancing. They were no longer acting merely in defence of Egyptian soil, but were moving out upon new and wonderful adventures of their own. Egypt would not share in the spoils of these adventures, yet in pursuance of them large demands were to be made upon her.

General Murray began his forward movement in the late summer. Never moving far ahead of the railway construction, his army advanced slowly across the desert, and by the winter had reached the frontier at Rafa, and was facing the Turkish forces entrenched between Gaza and Beersheba on the opposite side. He was now some hundreds of miles from the Delta of Egypt, where his base lay, and connected with it only by a slender line of communication. Geographically there was a wide separation between Egypt and the theatre of that military effort upon which all the energies and attention of the British were now concentrated. Inevitably, a far wider separation was to follow between the interests of the two countries. The Egyptian Government was receiving ever more frequent and larger requests to employ Egyptian resources in aid of the military forces of Great Britain. Since in common with all educated opinion, the Government was now beginning to entertain vague but optimistic and comprehensive speculations regarding what might happen with the cessation of hostilities, they were only too ready to comply with these requests. The hardships arising out of them did not fall upon themselves or at all upon the educated classes from whom they came, and this fact made their compliance all the readier. "The more we give", they felt, "the better terms we shall get." And the British officials who should have been alive to the dangers involved in this attitude, and should have been especially concerned to protect the masses from oppression, were over-driven. At such a crisis in their country's affairs they would have found it almost impossible to justify any shadow of resistance to the claims of war: even if they had found the courage to resist, they

would have received no support, and would have been at once overborne from London. But the fact is that all men's minds were anaesthetised by the urgent needs of the moment and deadened to future dangers.

The position of the British officials was as difficult as that of the Government was easy. For any hardship they might inflict, or for any error of administration, the latter could plead that martial law and the pressure of the British were responsible. Their complacency would be remembered to their credit by the British in the post-War settlement which they confidently anticipated: it would be forgotten by the critics among their own countrymen once that settlement had been completed.

It was in a situation of such difficulty that Sir Reginald Wingate succeeded Sir Henry MacMahon in the last weeks of 1916. He had to take over responsibility for a civil administration which was half suppressed by the existence of martial law, wholly overshadowed by the swollen H.Q. and Base organisations of a large Expeditionary Force, and, even in the sphere in which it could operate alone, incapable by reason of the drain of war duties of undertaking all its responsibilities. He knew Egypt well and had many friends there: and he had also had a long and highly successful experience in dealing with the problems of Sudan administration. But the problems which then faced the High Commissioner in Egypt were of a very different kind, and not the least important of them consisted in guiding the Foreign Office aright. In spite of his administrative ability, of a thorough knowledge of Egypt and her ways, and a sound judgment, Wingate never succeeded in inducing the Foreign Office to give to his views the weight which,

as events conclusively proved, was due to them. Frequently attacked by the Army on the ground of the laxity of Egypt's war effort, his advice in regard to Egyptian politics persistently disregarded in Whitehall, his position was indeed unenviable.

## CHAPTER XVI

### 1917. STEADY INCREASE OF THE ARMY'S ACTIVITIES AND NEEDS

THE military events of 1917, as far as they come within the scope of the present history, are soon told. In March and April respectively, two unsuccessful and costly attempts were made to capture Gaza. Afterwards the British and Turkish forces remained in position opposite to one another throughout the summer, but during this period it was decided to conduct a vigorous offensive with strong forces against the Turks in Palestine. The plan was undertaken for reasons of general strategy, which are not relevant to our history, and in pursuance of it General Allenby was appointed to relieve General Murray, and arrived in June to take command of the E.E.F. In November the British forces occupied Gaza, and in December the capture of Jerusalem completed the first stage of the advance into Palestine.

General Allenby's first step had been to transfer General Headquarters from Ismailia to the theatre of war, and it then became necessary to rearrange the main organisation of the force under his command. Under this reorganisation the second echelon of the Force became the formation with which Egypt was henceforward directly concerned. With its Head-

quarters at Cairo, the second echelon took over the immediate responsibility for the garrison in Egypt and the maintenance of order in that country, and it was also charged with the duty of finding supplies for the fighting forces and reinforcements for the Labour and Transport Corps. The consequent delegation of functions from the supreme to a subordinate command did not fail to increase the difficulties of the Civil Government and to widen the breach between the interests of Great Britain and Egypt.

The separatist tendency was not checked by the decree of May 1917 requiring all Egyptians, with very few exemptions, to surrender their arms. From the military point of view, it may perhaps have appeared to be a measure of which the necessity required no demonstration. A force which was about to embark upon large forward operations many miles from its base, could not risk even the slightest danger to the security of that base. But this point of view was not likely to appeal to Egyptians, who, conscious of no change in their own attitude of neutrality, reasoned only that Great Britain was determined to extend her domination over them.

There were, of course, excellent arguments for a general disarmament of the population of Egypt—arguments upon which the Arms Act of 1904 had been based. The fact that so many people possessed arms was admittedly one of the chief reasons of the prevalence of violent crime—and if disarmament were made general, and effective, there was no ground for any just complaint. But, unfortunately, the results of the 1904 Act had shown how difficult it was to disarm the people effectively. That Act had always remained, for practical purposes, a dead letter, and there was no reason to suppose that in the present

time of crisis the administration would be any more successful in enforcing its will. It was especially unfortunate, therefore, that the preamble of the relevant decree said little or nothing about the necessity for preventing crime, but placed in the forefront of the argument the fact that the measure was initiated by the military authority. The decree was a good instance of the manner in which it was possible for the Civil Government to evade its responsibilities if it wished to do so, and an unlucky preface to the chapter of difficulties which was now opening.

It will probably best contribute to a clear understanding of those difficulties if we now proceed to treat each one of them separately and to disregard chronological sequence to some extent at least. The period with which we shall be dealing is brief, and for a space of less than two years chronology can be sacrificed, it would seem, without serious loss.

The immediate problems with which the Government of Egypt was faced were grave enough. Most pressing among them was the growing inclination of the military authorities to complain that Egypt's war effort was insufficient. There was a widespread belief that the army was not receiving the assistance to which it was entitled. The belief was based, in the main, upon an argument which had in it a considerable element of truth. There was no doubt that Egypt was prospering materially as a direct result of the War. The prices of her products had risen to unexpected heights, and landowners, even the small-holding fellaheen, were making good profits and accumulating substantial reserves. The shopkeepers in the larger towns were also thriving upon the money expended by the troops, and the State Treasury was enjoying large annual surpluses, yearly increasing. In

1915-16 the State account showed a credit balance of £E1,160,000 and in 1916-17 of £E2,680,000.

Meanwhile, although her geographical situation had been perhaps the most dangerous of all at the beginning of the War, her territory had been secured from all harm by British protection. All this there was no gainsaying, but to Egyptian minds it was not valid as argument. Apart from the fact that her financial position was in great measure due to economies forced upon her by circumstances, and that these economies would be largely wiped out when circumstances again permitted her to undertake all the work of maintenance and renewal which had perforce been postponed—apart from this she could argue with force that her surplus income, which was roughly calculated to amount in 1917 to about £E35,000,000, was being invested almost entirely in allied War Loans, that her administrative machinery had been freely put at the disposal of the military, and that for them it had built railways and roads, again neglecting, at considerable future cost, the necessary maintenance of the country's own public works. It was also, to Egyptians, undeniably true that the presence of the armies quartered upon her was a disadvantage to be weighed against the prosperity they brought.

But for the British military authorities the fact remained that Egypt was safe and prosperous: and the payment she was making for these benefits appeared to them disproportionately small. Their grave need was for recruits for the Labour Corps and the Camel Transport Corps, and it was not long before the G.O.C. was urging more drastic measures. The two corps were now, in 1917, at a strength of about 100,000, of whom 23,000 were serving in



France. The method of voluntary enlistment was proving entirely inadequate to maintain even the existing strength, and the amount of labour required was rapidly increasing.

When General Headquarters urged the introduction of compulsory recruitment, Sir Reginald Wingate justly pointed out that such a measure would be an undeniable breach of the declaration of 1914, wherein we had so explicitly ourselves assumed the whole burden of carrying on the War. At the beginning of the War it had been decided that all Egypt would be required to do would be to abstain from hostile activity, and that her population would be most usefully employed in producing the necessary foodstuffs and cotton. We had given her definitely to understand that that was all that we asked of her, and while she on her part had faithfully carried out her share of that understanding, we had never genuinely carried out ours, and were now proposing to disregard it altogether. It was clear, however, that even the present voluntary recruitment by which it was endeavoured to secure an annual enrolment of only 3000 recruits was extremely unpopular, and that no inducement of any kind would make voluntary recruitment more successful.

The problem was one of extreme complexity, and it is very difficult to see how it could have been solved. Two extreme courses were open. Either we must explain fully to Egypt the difficulties in which we found ourselves, point out that in view of them we were no longer able, without serious risk to military operations, to carry out the pledge of 1914, and ask them to absolve us from it, to the extent of conscripting recruits for the Labour Corps. Or we must seek, if possible, other sources of supply, when

voluntary labour was no longer forthcoming from Egypt.

Unfortunately the second of these courses offered no solution, and the first was attended, in the circumstances of the time, by very serious risks. Neither course was taken. The military authorities continued to press insistently for more recruits. The Egyptian Government continued to resist the suggestion that compulsion should be applied. But inevitably, under military insistence, they began to apply a greater administrative pressure. The British civil authorities must have been alive to the grave dangers inherent in this tendency: they must have realised that British supervision was now so weakened by the reduction of experienced personnel and by the pressure of other duties that it would be impossible to prevent the abuses which were certain to arise. But exactly the same dangers were inherent in compulsion, and in the meanwhile the Army's demands must be supplied and there was no other possible method of meeting them.

Egyptian Ministers were anxious to comply with the Army's demands: they began by offering substantial inducements to voluntary enlistment and in October 1917 they announced that twelve months' service in any auxiliary corps would exempt from all obligations under the Military Service Conscription Law. But this and indeed any other inducement they might offer was bound to prove ineffectual. Compulsion was the only possible method of securing the necessary flow of recruits, and the Egyptian Cabinet were not prepared to shoulder the responsibility for conscription. It is difficult to blame them for this: but, after refusing so large a responsibility, it was inevitable that they should fall back upon the in-

direct methods to which the soil of the country was so favourable. The Mudirs were given very definitely to understand, and through them the Omdehs, that if the necessary number of recruits was not forthcoming from any village or district, it was the officials concerned who would suffer. These officials took the measures which they thought most likely to avert the unpleasantness which threatened.

Colonel Elgood<sup>1</sup> describes the results as follows: "Village Sheikhs chose the victims as they thought fit and without interference. Many an old score was thus paid off, and agricultural Egypt became rent with feuds. Families denounced families, and corruption poisoned the air. Fellaheen, who could not or would not pay for exemption frequently were the first to be taken: personal enemies of village authority the next. In some localities the practice was reminiscent of the Naval press gang. Country folk attending the local markets were rounded up and sent to the nearest labour dépôt."

In fact the old pre-Occupation methods of tyranny were being busily revived by the officials in the countryside: and it shows how serious had been the relaxation of British control, that this should have been possible. The lack of experienced personnel in the British official ranks was now so marked, owing to the demands of war service, that there was no means whereby these disastrous results—which would have followed equally upon conscription—could be avoided. Had British control been sufficiently strong to supervise the methods employed and prevent abuse, the harm done would have been greatly lessened. As it was, the fellaheen were filled with a burning sense of injury, and they ascribed the whole blame to the

<sup>1</sup> *Egypt and the Army.*

British, who, they believed, had issued direct orders that they should be so treated. The War had to be won, and this was part of the price: the only blame that can be attached to the British authorities in this tragic matter was—that they did not foresee and prepare for the inevitable results.

The Labour Corps had a fine record, and there is no doubt that it did excellent work, under fair conditions on the whole. Without its assistance the task of the Army, under General Allenby, would have been rendered much more difficult. The Camel Transport Corps, manned by Egyptians recruited in the same way, also rendered invaluable service in conditions of much greater hardship and danger. But the price that was paid for those services was large indeed—no less than the loss of the confidence of the masses in British justice and fairmindedness. Egypt cannot be blamed because her labouring classes did not volunteer for service; the Army cannot be blamed for asking insistently for Egyptian labour. Once again British policy must bear the blame for refusing to face the facts squarely. It is true that the fellaheen had other grievances to brood over at the end of the War, but none that rankled so deeply as the recruitment grievance. They felt, very severely, the loss of their beasts of burden, taken from them in order to meet military requirements. In 1917 their agriculture was prospering, and it was unlikely that they would willingly surrender their means of transporting their produce to market. But it was in 1917 that the need for camel transport in the theatre of war began to increase so urgently. The Purchasing Commissions which were operating on behalf of the Army found great difficulty in securing the necessary supply of camels. Even the confidential circulars which the

Government issued to the Mudirs urging them to zealous efforts, did not produce sufficient results, and were, of course, producing the usual crop of injustice. The rich man secured immunity, the poor man had to lose his camel. Finally, in November 1917, Egyptians were commanded to produce their beasts—both camels and donkeys. The beasts which were passed fit were marked for military service; the remainder were left. In defence of this order it may be said that it was no breach of faith, for the Proclamation of 1914 had specifically reserved to the G.O.C. the right to requisition if need arose. It also secured that all owners were treated alike and thus put an end to administrative injustice. But the fellaheen could not endure to lose their beasts of burden, whatever the price they might get. It was a real hardship to them, because of the difficulty of replacement, and the essential part that transport played in their agricultural operations. It seemed especially unjust to them that female camels should be requisitioned: this was a form of capital levy for which they were not prepared.

The ultimate justification for placing upon their shoulders both the burdens above described was the urgency of military needs. Even from this point of view it was hard to justify the collections which were made for the Red Cross Fund. The name of the Fund for which appeal was made was in itself unfortunate—it was hardly likely to stir a wave of voluntary generosity in a population composed almost entirely of followers of the Crescent. It was still more unfortunate that, inspired by the lead given by Sultan Hussein and by the incautious support given to the appeal by British officials, the local officers of Government sought to acquire merit through it. They

applied all the traditional methods of extortion, for which the British power, of course, received the entire blame, and piled up still higher the load of grievances which the fellah was accumulating against the Occupation.

Thus, throughout the provinces of Egypt, the temper of the people was slowly being brought to a highly inflammable condition. The long years of Cromer's rule had had their effect upon the character of the fellaheen. They had acquired a measure of independence which had not been known for years under Turkish rule, they had lost much of their respect for authority, and they had lost the habit of patient endurance of oppression. At such a juncture to their other grievances was added a definite shortage of commodities. Superficially it might have appeared that on this head the situation was one to inspire confidence. But a closer examination seems to show that here too there was cause for grave anxiety.

Although many of the agricultural classes had been taken from their homes, by methods compounded of tyranny and injustice, and forced into a service which they neither liked nor saw good ground for: although their beasts of burden and their fodder had been extorted from them—and in some cases their money—by the same methods and for purposes with which they had no sympathy: all these grievances would soon have been forgotten if Government action had been directed to securing that while producers would be free to reap a fair share of profit from rising prices, the resources of the country would be so husbanded as to avoid a scarcity of necessities.

We have seen that in 1915 there had been a Government restriction upon the area to be planted with

cotton, but that after operating for one year the restriction had been withdrawn in weak surrender to the outcry of the large landowners. Thereafter until 1918 nothing was done to conserve or increase the country's capacity to produce food supplies. The area planted with cotton increased, as was to be expected—in 1916 forty per cent. of the perennially irrigated cultivated land of Egypt was planted with cotton and in 1917 thirty-nine per cent. This constituted a serious menace to the essential food supplies of the country, and in September 1917 the Government, becoming alive to the danger, issued a decree which contained a grave warning to the country on this point.

It forbade the planting of cotton in upper Egypt, and restricted it elsewhere to one-third of the cultivable area. The decree was, however, only partially effective because the fine for an offence against it was fixed at a ridiculously low figure. The situation, therefore, as the cultivator saw it, when the time for planting came, was roughly as follows:

He could plant cotton, of which the price in an open market had risen enormously and was certain to rise again to what height nobody could say: in the winter of 1914–15 it had been twelve dollars a *kantar*, in the spring of 1917 thirty-nine dollars a *kantar*<sup>1</sup>—and the punishment for excess planting was nothing compared with the profits to be made. He could obey the law and plant cereals or pulses, but no matter how high the prices of these commodities might rise, they were subject to a tariff imposed by decree, and, therefore, he himself would not profit:

<sup>1</sup> The 1918 cotton crop was purchased entire by the British Government at forty-two dollars a *kantar*. It was a fair price at the time, but was made a great grievance of later on, when the 1919 crop was selling at two hundred dollars a *kantar*.

he was not allowed to export until the fulfilments of local needs were assured, and local prices were fixed by tariffs.

It followed, therefore, quite naturally, that although the production of cereals was increased in 1918, the increase was nothing like sufficient to relieve the urgent necessities of the country. To add to the gravity of the situation, in November 1917 the Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force announced that it had now become necessary to requisition in Egypt the supplies required for the use of the force under his command. The Council of Ministers thereupon set up a Supplies Control Board, with the double duty of safeguarding the food supplies of Egypt and of collecting the supplies demanded by the military authorities. For the latter purpose the President of the Board was given power, under martial law, and the Board proceeded to requisition what was needed: a process which was bound to give rise to further cases of injustice, however careful the supervision.

The Board also proceeded to establish, as far as possible, a close control over production, distribution, and prices of food supplies. Some of its activities were beneficial, others irritating and ineffective, others prodigiously unbusinesslike. But however it might succeed in ensuring fair distribution, it could not at this stage wipe out the effects of previous lack of vision, or ensure that the supply of cereals, the staple food of the population, would be adequate for their needs in 1918 and 1919.

A situation thus arose in which the poorest classes of the population were unable to purchase sufficient food for themselves, and it was this fact which rendered the town populations of Egypt so keenly



inflammable in 1919. The situation was directly due to the policy pursued by the Council of Ministers, who in these matters of internal administration had been left to act largely upon their own initiative, without interference from British authority. It was, therefore, a situation which could only have developed under the protectorate policy adopted in 1914; and one in which the political agitator could operate with wonderfully favourable chances of success.

As a nation, we used at one time to make much use of the theory of our Imperial trusteeship. We regarded our care for the interests of the masses as an ethical justification for a large portion of our colonial empire, and as the wisest expedient for maintaining that empire. So that perhaps the greatest madness that ever overtook us was the madness which has caused us to abrogate that trusteeship. In Egypt during the years of the War, no educated Egyptian joined the Labour Corps, no well-to-do Egyptian went short of necessary supplies, no influential Egyptian was forced to contribute to our aid against his will. It was the masses upon whom all these burdens were laid, and it was very easy for others to convince them that it was we who had laid them there: for even if we were not guilty of so grave a charge, it was at least true that in the inevitable stress of war there was little we could do to protect them.

It is only fair to the officials, who were struggling gallantly, under an impossible burden of difficulties, to maintain British ideals of administration in Egypt, to point out that the fault was none of theirs. But if those who advocated a protectorate policy in 1914 could have foreseen the injustices which would be laid during the protectorate period upon the Egyptian masses, they would surely have shrunk

from the decision. Had we then taken over the direct responsibility for the government of Egypt, should we not have been compelled to maintain a supervision which would have restrained abuses and mitigated the results of war? Can it not further be argued that the form of indirect rule which resulted from a protectorate was only too well calculated to prevent the British intervention in internal administration which was necessary for the welfare of the masses, while at the same time ensuring that the responsibility for their sufferings would be laid at our door just as fully as if the government had been entirely in our hands? It is instructive, at this point, to recall the remarks which Mr. Cheetham, in advocating the protectorate, had made to the Secretary of State in 1914.

"To these immediate considerations", he wrote, "I would add that the existing system of governing through native hands is not the most efficient form of government, but it is understood here *and provides an excuse for administrative shortcomings which would disappear with annexation.*"

How erroneous this view proved to be and how completely the protectorate failed to provide in the eyes of the fellaheen the anticipated excuses for administrative shortcomings, is very fully recorded in the bitter events which so soon followed the close of hostilities. Indeed, the history of the protectorate can be searched from end to end without a single instance appearing in which the British Occupation was excused for administrative shortcomings.

## CHAPTER XVII

### 1917. POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES APPEARING

IF the material difficulties which faced the authorities in Egypt were formidable, the political problems which came before them were no less important. During 1917 the health of Sultan Hussein was causing serious misgiving and the possibility that he might not long survive led to anxious correspondence between London and Cairo. The problem was to find a successor who would be popular and respected by Egyptians, and also willing and able to co-operate with the British authorities.

The times were too critical to permit of the possibility of mistake, and in the absence of any outstanding candidate for the succession it was natural that the question of annexation should again be mooted. The same question was approached also from another angle, because it happened that at this very time a suggestion was being advanced that it would be an advantage if the affairs of Egypt were to be transferred from the supervision of the Foreign Office to that of the Colonial Office.

The basic argument for such a change was that Egypt, as a protectorate, was an administrative problem primarily, and that the Foreign Office was not an administrative but a diplomatic office. The

final decision, therefore, in regard to important administrative problems was, where Egypt was concerned, in the hands of officials who had no administrative training or experience, and were on the contrary, by habit of mind, always tending to take too general a view, and to subordinate our own interests in Egypt and the internal interests of Egypt herself to considerations of European or Mediterranean diplomacy. The suggestion was, of course, attacked with extreme vigour by the Foreign Office itself—and not unnaturally. Nor could it hope for ultimate acceptance, for the simple and sufficient reason that it would appear to be, and would in fact be, a breach of the declaration made in December 1914. That argument was now decisive in regard to annexation, and it was equally decisive in regard to any step which would appear in practice to be moving towards annexation.

The policy adopted in 1914 must be followed, however great its defects. Moreover, the Sultan and his Ministers had for several years offered us a large and much-needed measure of co-operation upon the strength of it, and we could not appear to reverse it in 1917, without losing the goodwill, not of the wavering elements only, but also of every element that counted in Egyptian public life. From this point of view it would have been quite ineffectual to point out that the step was taken solely in order to secure better administration, just as it would have been useless to argue that annexation would have introduced a much-needed simplification into the government. Egypt would unanimously have regarded both policies as a reversal of promises, and would have believed such reversal to be prompted solely by motives of greed and self-interest. They would have said “in 1914

when you were uncertain of the strength of your position here, you made promises to us to secure our support. Now, in 1917, when you think you have us at your mercy, you withdraw those promises and take from us all the political power you can."

The growing difficulties of the actual situation in Egypt undoubtedly constituted a strong temptation to seek a remedy in drastic change. The position in regard to the Capitulations still remained entirely indeterminate, and so ill thought out that it appeared certain that our internal policy and our external would defeat each other. We had put the High Commissioner into a position where his powers were undefined and his opportunities circumscribed; nobody knew whether the protectorate had strengthened his position or weakened it, and under martial law nobody cared very much. And finally, we had placed Egypt outside the comradeship of the War, and set her to wait with ever-growing impatience for something that we had never intended to promise her.

But, in spite of all these damaging facts, the argument that we must do nothing to make our good faith suspect remained valid and was, indeed, the only relevant argument. The discussion was, in fact, needlessly complicated by bringing out from diplomatic pigeon-holes schemes for making Egypt a centre of influence in Islam. In point of fact, Egypt had never within living memory held any status in Islam, and with Arabia throwing off the Turkish yoke, it was extremely unlikely that she would acquire such status. Yet it was apparently the view of the Foreign Office at this time—and was regarded as a point of very serious importance—that in the event of Turkey losing her temporal power, Egypt might secure a dominating position in the Moslem world. They

saw, even in 1917, a vision of Egypt, prosperous and contented, enjoying a certain measure of political freedom, standing as a bulwark against European encroachments upon the Middle East, and as a beacon to which all Mahomedan eyes would turn. The vision might have been permitted to exuberant minds in 1900; its appearance, seventeen years later, tends to show a surprising, even dangerous, atmosphere of unreality.

It is difficult not to conclude from this that those who in England were responsible for policy had very little idea of the actual state of affairs which was being produced at the time in Egypt itself, and no real knowledge of the Mahomedan world in general. And in any case, it was misleading to mix into the consideration of internal problems arguments drawn from world policy. Arguments about France and Italy, about Turkey and the Middle East, about the Mahomedan population of India, might give an imposing appearance of comprehensiveness to our policy, but they were not relevant to the discussion at this stage. Their use is an excellent illustration of the strength of the very case they were employed to repel. In far-reaching plans for Egypt's future position in the Middle East, considerations of her own internal administration were trampled underfoot, and the fact that Egypt might conceivably have other plans for herself was being lost sight of.

But surely the real question at issue still remained a simple one, unaffected by considerations drawn so far afield. It was now more than ever essential that Egypt should be bound by close ties to the British Empire, and for this purpose British control over the administration of Egypt had to be maintained. How could this essential object be achieved, in view of a

state of affairs which, whether its cause was negligence or the inevitable compulsion of a life-and-death struggle, had arisen in Egypt? It is pathetically clear now that this question had more importance, although it was never asked at the time, than the questions relating to Arabian and Indian politics which were being discussed at such length.

The importance of Egypt's geographical position at this time was not her connection with the Moslem world, but her inextricable connection with the communications of the Empire; and by this must be understood not only the free use of the Suez Canal, but all communication by sea routes, air routes, or land routes, with India and Australia within the Empire, and with Persia, Mesopotamia, and China, where our political and commercial interests at stake were incalculable: there were also our aerial communications with African territories. Last of all, there was our administration in the Sudan. For the maintenance of all these, it was essential that Great Britain should have control over Egyptian territory and over the Egyptian Government.

Here was a strong argument for annexation, and it was reinforced by arguments which related to the interests of Egypt herself. First, was the abrogation of the Capitulations which would follow almost automatically, and would free Egypt from an obstacle which had continually impeded her progress. Next, there was the steady economic and political development which might be confidently expected within the fold of the Empire. And lastly, there was the simplification of administration which would result from a well-defined position, in which the British High Commissioner's powers would be clear and intelligible.

The strength of these arguments must be admitted, but against them had to be marshalled, first, the facts in regard to the temper and aspirations of Egypt herself. It had to be recognised that the temper of the fellaheen for the first time was becoming sullen and inflammable, and that although the political classes were prosperous and expectant rather than discontented, they would, none the less, have been immediately alienated by any attempt to annex Egypt to the Empire. But it was also the case that the grievances which were inflaming the masses were such as could be removed by the restoration of efficient administration, and that order and good government could be maintained without difficulty in spite of the hostility of politicians, provided that there was a firm and unanimous determination on the part of Great Britain to maintain them.

When these arguments had been given their due weight, the next question demanding consideration was, the possible effect upon our Eastern dependencies. A careful appreciation of these possibilities would, one may venture to think, have led to the conclusion that in this direction there was not a very great deal to be feared, or a great deal to be hoped, from our dealings with Egypt. The Moslems of Arabia were absorbed in the fortunes of their own revolt from Turkey, and the possibilities with which that revolt was fraught. To them the assistance and support of England was infinitely more important than anything that could come out of Egypt, and if the Turkish Caliphate were to dissolve into nothingness, it was not even the ruler of Mecca, although he was descended from the Prophet, a member of the tribe of the Koreish, possessor of the Haramain, and enthroned at the spiritual heart of Islam, who was



likely to become the leader of Arabia. A policy dictated by the exigencies of a military situation supported him with all the influence of Great Britain and by means of fantastically large subsidies in gold. But it was fortunate that a less opulent though equally trustworthy support had been quietly accorded to the Wahabi ruler, who was destined for a much more permanent and widely acknowledged leadership.

When we turn to India we find that there also the Moslem community had their own problems to solve: it might be that their feelings would be to some extent alienated by the virtual extinction of Moslem rule in Egypt, but in the War they had fought with us against their co-religionists and helped to break the temporal power of the Caliph: and provided that the step was taken circumspectly and without injuring religious susceptibilities, it was hardly likely that they would make much ado about so comparatively small a matter as the increase of our temporal power in Egypt. In truth, the affair was too remote to interest very closely the majority of the Indian Moslems, and though it might be used as material for propaganda by the disaffected, the fact remains that the greater part of the Moslem population of India were themselves living under direct British rule without harm and with some benefit to their religion: it would be difficult to stir them to much heartburning if others of whom they knew little were brought to the same position.

It must be again insisted that the crux of the argument was concerned with Egypt itself, and the real difficulty was to satisfy Egypt and at the same time to retain the essential measure of British control over Egyptian territory. In 1917, it was apparently

thought perfectly easy to do both these things. At the beginning of the War we were over-timid, at the end we were carelessly over-confident. The authorities appeared to have no idea of what was happening in Egypt, of the state of political feeling there, or of the grievances which were burning the hearts of the fellaheen. They decided the case upon arguments which had little relation to the facts and possibilities of the situation actually existing. They talked with rectitude of the fundamental need of keeping faith, and of retaining the confidence of Egypt, but there is at the same time no evidence that they had any idea of what they must do in order to achieve these results. It is clear that the authorities had in no way realised the interpretations that were now being put upon the ambiguous declaration which had been made in 1914. Egyptians were now beginning to give this declaration a meaning which we had never intended it to bear, but which its phraseology unfortunately permitted. They now claimed that we had intended a certain course of action at the end of the War. In order, therefore, to maintain our reputation for good faith, what was necessary was that we should take the course which they expected. If we were not prepared to do that, it was inevitable that we should lose their confidence in our honesty of purpose. The choice, in fact, was not between annexation and a continuance of the existing protectorate, but between annexation and an independent Egypt bound to the Empire by such slender ties as she might herself permit. Except that the Egyptian demand had become in the interval more extreme, it was exactly the same choice which we were considering from 1919 to 1922. Then we had to decide whether to establish direct rule over Egypt, or to give her independence while endeavour-

ing at the same time to retain a precarious control over what was regarded still as essential to our imperial welfare.

Very naturally the thought will come into the reader's mind at this point, that the task of deciding what ought to have been done in the past is a simple one compared with the task of those who had to take decisions on the spot and at the time. Much that was obscure then is clear now: much that was commonly accepted then is universally rejected now. But there are still certain principles of administration which stand for all time, and which appear in the later years of the War and afterwards to have been neglected in Egypt. One of these is that Government must at all costs inform itself accurately as to what is in the minds of those whom it governs, and another is that a policy which the authorities are not prepared to carry through against opposition is no better than no policy at all.

Could those who in 1917 were complacently visualising an Egypt "prosperous and contented", "enjoying a *certain measure* of political freedom", really have been accurately informed as to the state of Egypt? And as to a unanimous determination to carry through a policy of maintaining our control over Egypt, the student of history has only to study the deliberations of 1917-22, the frequent declarations of intention so regularly and so quickly retracted, to realise that such a determination was never present.

The arguments in favour of annexation were ably summarised by General Clayton, Chief Director of the Arab Intelligence Bureau, and subsequently High Commissioner for Iraq, in a brilliant Note, which is printed as an Appendix to this chapter.

Similar advice was also proffered by Sir Reginald Wingate out of his long experience, after full consultation with the Sultan Hussein, who was so impressed, before his death, with the advantages to Egypt of annexation to the British Empire, that he is known actually to have suggested this course. On July 27, 1917, he wrote to the Secretary of State outlining the policy which he thought should be followed:

“In framing such a policy I assume that the main object in view will be to determine the form of Government, which on the one hand will safeguard permanently and effectually the British position in Egypt, and on the other hand will be acceptable at least to a majority of the inhabitants of the country and calculated to acquire their co-operation and support.

“It is generally assumed that the abolition of the Sultanate would be accompanied by a declaration of annexation. With or without the former, the latter act would certainly have a profound effect on the native population. . . . I am of opinion that, provided the act was made tactfully and at a favourable juncture, annexation would be accepted passively, if without enthusiasm, by the bulk of the population, and would tend to facilitate and strengthen our control and influence on the administration of the country, and ultimately to improve and solidify our relations with the natives. . . .

“I should be failing in my duty, were I not to point out that annexation may eventually prove advisable and necessary to the attainment of the dual political aims quoted at the beginning of this despatch, and to express my opinion that the local difficulties in the way of annexation need not

be over-estimated nor regarded as in any way insuperable."

But in view of the lack of information already indicated concerning the new interpretation placed by Egyptians on the declaration of a protectorate, and in view of the resulting inability of the authorities to appreciate the real issue involved in the decision, it was inevitable that the protectorate policy should be adhered to.

The immediate problem was to find a successor to the Sultan who would continue to follow that ruler's admirable example. The first consideration was naturally to be given to Prince Kemal-al-Din, the only son of Hussein himself. It was known that the Sultan's personal wish was that Prince Kemal-al-Din should succeed him, but the Prince himself did not take much part in public life, was generally regarded as being of a retiring disposition, and some doubt was also felt in regard to the nature of the influences brought to bear upon him in his home. For all these reasons the authorities felt by no means sure that he had the capacity to occupy so onerous a position, or the inclination to co-operate with them. But after a good deal of negotiation, the Prince himself set all doubts at rest by addressing a letter to his father in which he renounced voluntarily all claim to the succession. The Sultan had apparently himself entertained some doubts in regard to his son's willingness to succeed him, for he had let it be known that, failing such a succession, he would like his brother, Prince Ahmed Fuad, to become Sultan: and as his brother was childless, he indicated his cousin Prince Yusuf Kemal also as a possible choice.

The claims of Prince Ahmed Fuad were therefore the next to be considered. He had played a consider-

able part in the public life of Egypt, and was thought by the authorities to be at any rate not Anglophobe in his sympathies. From this point of view, therefore, there was no serious objection to be advanced against him; but, on the other hand, he could not be said to have a position of great popularity or influence among Egyptians. He had spent much of his life in Italy, spoke Italian better than Arabic, and for these reasons was regarded by most Egyptians as not sufficiently Egyptian in his sympathies. There was no other claimant, however, who could be said to surpass him in qualifications; and as he was the Sultan's brother and his choice, he was finally selected by His Majesty's Government.

The day after Prince Kemal-al-Din's letter of renunciation had been written and received, October 9, 1917, Sultan Hussein died. His death was a grievous loss both to Egypt and to Great Britain. The love and respect which he had acquired during his early life had not diminished during his rulership. When the Sultanate of Egypt was offered to him, he was a man endeared to the masses as a good landlord, an experienced and able farmer, and as having a generous and sympathetic nature. By educated Egyptians and by Englishmen he was much respected as an honest, enlightened, and sincere patriot, and as a "grand seigneur" with great charm, and a dignity of manner acquired in his early association with the Court of the Third Empire, and never subsequently lost.

After he had accepted the Sultanate, his popularity temporarily suffered by reason of that acceptance, but only with the fanatical and unenlightened; and there is no doubt that during the later years of the War he wielded very great influence by reason of

the personal position he had attained. The debt which Great Britain owed him was incalculable. He had been a staunch supporter of the Allies' cause, and had never ceased to believe that ultimate victory would be theirs. He had given unstintingly such help as Egypt was permitted, and had himself been lavishly generous towards efforts to help the sick and wounded. But throughout the War he had always in mind the satisfaction of what he regarded as the legitimate aspirations of his country. He had accepted not without grave heart-searchings the protectorate as an inevitable measure,<sup>1</sup> and as being in the best interests of Egypt, but he had always intended, as soon as the War was over, to press with all the force at his command for a large degree of constitutional progress under the protection of Great Britain. He had had a difficult position, and we can hardly claim to have given him the full support which was his due from us, but in spite of definite slights, and in spite of the fact that the welter of British civil and military commands in Egypt sometimes paid to him less than the deference due both to his position and his personal merits, he was dignified and magnanimous enough not to allow this to affect his attitude in any way.

Had it not been for the rapid decline in his health which wrought such a change in him towards the end, and for his premature death, his influence would have had a far-reaching effect upon the situation after the Armistice. Such was the respect for, and confidence in him felt by all classes and peoples in Egypt, that he might well have suc-

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Cheetham had been unable to persuade Prince Hussein to accept the Protectorate in spite of repeated efforts. It was not until late in November that the intervention of Mr. Storrs, the Oriental Secretary, induced the Prince to change his mind, and restored the Residency from despair to triumph.

ceeded in averting the catastrophe. The tragedy was that in 1919 there was no one in authority who was capable at once of restraining and calming the extreme elements in Egypt, and of securing the serious attention of the British authorities in England. With his death there snapped the last chain which could hold England and Egypt together in sympathy and interest. The drift apart was now inevitable, and continued with increasing force through 1917 and 1918 and until the final catastrophe of 1919. He was still not an old man when he died. Such a stroke of ill-fortune, supervening upon a series of ill-conceived half-measures, left the British Government for the time, at all events, friendless in Egypt.

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## APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XVII

NOTE BY BRIGADIER-GENERAL CLAYTON<sup>1</sup>  
ON THE  
FUTURE POLITICAL STATUS OF EGYPT

IN considering this question two main considerations present themselves:

- (a) What is the best course to adopt having in view the security and promotion of Imperial interests?
- (b) What course will best promote the welfare and prosperity of Egypt and the Egyptians themselves?

The two possible courses which are open to His Majesty's Government are either to maintain the existing Protectorate or to abolish the Sultanate and establish a form of government under the direct control of the British Crown, which in fact amounts to annexation.

The lessons of the War have shown very clearly how vital to the Empire is the Suez Canal and all that it implies. The enemy were quick to see our vulnerable point and to strike at it through the instrumentality of their Turkish ally, thus not only menacing the vital cord of our Empire but assisting to secure their own position on the line Berlin to Baghdad and the Persian Gulf. England has maintained her own position and frustrated the plans of her enemies by force of arms at the cost of many lives and millions of money, but she cannot afford to relax the effort in time of peace or jeopardise her position by anything short of complete and absolute predominance. Can this be ensured absolutely under the régime of a Protectorate, with a ruling dynasty which is of Turkish origin and cannot but be of Turkish sympathy? Personally I am convinced that it cannot. Even in the event of such a peace as we hope to gain when Turkey will be broken and powerless for many years the risk is considerable. But should the dawn of peace find Turkey still a Power, the Sultan of Turkey still holding the Khalifate of Islam and German influence still working in Turkey, it is hardly con-

<sup>1</sup> The late Brigadier-General Sir Gilbert Clayton, High Commissioner of Irak.

ceivable that the existing system can fail to be anything but a source of difficulty and danger.

Given the continued existence of the present ruling dynasty it is inevitable, in an Oriental country such as Egypt, that such increased powers as the tendencies of the times may render it necessary to grant to the Egyptian proper will fall largely into the hands of the Sultanate and the Pasha class.

It may be argued that this is an advantage in that, having the Sultan under control, we have an increasingly powerful lever in our hands. This presupposes a loyal and Anglophile Sultan, and experience points to the fact that, with the notable exception of Sultan Hussein, those members of the family of Mohammed Ali who have shown any aptitude or capacity for rulership have also displayed those pro-Turkish and Anglophobe sentiments which are common to the bulk of the Pasha class, however skilfully they may conceal them when dealing with high British officials.

It has been contended that the merits of the various candidates for succession to the Sultanate cannot be judged until they have been tried by actual experience and that it is always open to His Majesty's Government to depose an unsuitable or disloyal ruler. This is surely unsound argument and would mean that His Majesty's Government were prepared to gamble on securing, if necessary by means of a series of experiments, a suitable personality for the throne of Egypt. In an atmosphere engendered by an universal war drastic measures, carried through by *force majeure*, excite comparatively little comment, but in time of peace the deposition of a native ruler, even though recognised as under British protection and control, is a measure which would not, I submit, be undertaken until an impasse had been reached and irreparable mischief done.

From what may be termed the Imperial strategical point of view, therefore, it does not seem possible under the existing régime to secure that complete and absolute control which is so necessary in Egypt where lies the keystone of our whole Near Eastern fabric.

It remains to consider the effect which would be produced by what would be tantamount to annexation, in other parts of the

Moslem world, notably in the Arab territories and in India. A somewhat intimate study of Arab affairs during the last three years leads me to the conviction that, outside Egypt, the Sultan has little or no influence and is generally regarded as a puppet set up by England for her own purposes. He has no real religious "cachet" and therefore carries little weight in that respect, apart from the fact that he is himself a Moslem; on the contrary he is execrated in hostile quarters for having set himself up against the Khalifa of Islam, and this cannot fail to have a certain influence even in pro-British Moslem circles. Moreover, he has not even the pride of ancient lineage which counts for so much in the Arab mind. As regards India, I am not qualified to speak, but I am constrained to think that there also the above-mentioned arguments may apply in some degree.

In considering the question as it affects Egypt itself, it is convenient to go back to the outbreak of war with Turkey when the existing Protectorate was established. With all deference to the views of officials of high standing and great experience, I have always been convinced, and the experience of the past two and a half years has not caused me to change my opinion, that a mistaken policy was adopted and that annexation, followed as it was bound to be by a long period during which martial law was in force, would have assisted us to secure an unassailable position in the country by the time that peace came and the supreme military authority was removed.

There may have been external reasons which made it inadvisable to annex (though the fact that annexation was suggested by His Majesty's Government shows that they were not insuperable), but the arguments put forward by the local authorities are not convincing. The following are some of the arguments adduced:

1. *The preservation of internal quiet and native co-operation with martial law.*

Internal quiet was dependent mainly on one factor, viz., the presence in Egypt of an overwhelmingly strong force of British troops, against which, as was obvious to the meanest intelligence, no local rising could have the least chance of success,

This factor, combined with the natural inertness of the Egyptian himself and the complete absence of any leading spirit, was sufficient to frustrate the machinations of the enemy agencies which undoubtedly existed, but in the absence of any adequate military force disturbance would not have been rendered less probable by the fact that a Protectorate had been substituted for annexation.

*2. Probable resignation of Ministers and a large proportion of native officials, thereby rendering government extremely difficult and causing dislocation of native domestic life.*

That there was a strong inclination on the part of the ruling native class towards a Protectorate as the only alternative to annexation is undoubted and only to be expected. It can hardly be denied that under a Protectorate British control is less close, with the consequence that the administration is less efficient. It has been argued that Orientals prefer to rule themselves with less efficiency than may be in accordance with our ideas and that they are perhaps the happier in doing so. This is doubtless true of those who hope to wield the instrument of government and who realise that the more inefficient it is, the greater their opportunity of profit to themselves, but I venture to think that even in the East the mass of the people, on whom the burden of inefficiency falls, are no less appreciative of the benefits of a just and firm rule than are their Western counterparts. Moreover, I think that the large majority of those who really know anything of the Egyptian mentality and character would agree in saying that the vast proportion of Egyptians, when it actually comes to the point, are contented to accept the *fait accompli* and swallow their principles rather than lose their salaries.

*3. The bad effect which annexation would have on Islamic feeling and the Arab world.*

I have no hesitation in saying that, for reasons similar to those I have quoted earlier in this Note, in my opinion the effect of annexation on the Arab communities would have been negligible, especially at that juncture when the Arab world was in a state of confusion and perplexity and its opinions in-

choate and unformed. As regards India I am not qualified to speak, but the fact remains that His Majesty's Government suggested annexation indicates that they had considered any possible danger in that quarter and were prepared to face it.

4. *That annexation could more simply be resorted to at a later date.*

This is suspiciously like an opportunist argument and events have proved it an incorrect one, at least up to the present.

It is admittedly a more difficult and invidious matter to annex now that a Protectorate has been definitely established and, to external appearance, worked satisfactorily for two and a half years, and it is impossible until the present Sultan dies or abdicates.

I am convinced, however, that virtual annexation is essential if the position of Great Britain in Egypt is to be established on a really firm and lasting basis, both as regards the Imperial interests in the Near East and as regards the future welfare and prosperity of Egypt itself.

The death or retirement of the present Sultan and the absence of any suitable successor could be made the opportunity of removing the dynasty of Mohammed Ali and including Egypt in the great commonwealth of autonomous nations under the British Crown. What extent of autonomy can be granted and what degree of British executive co-operation is necessary in the actual administration of the country is a question which is outside the scope of this paper, but I am convinced that it will be possible eventually, under such conditions, to grant a far larger measure of self-government than can ever be given with safety under the existing system.

I am fully aware of the difficulties, and even dangers, which lie in the way and of the contrary views of those whose opinions must carry far greater weight than mine, but I venture to think that somewhat undue weight is given to the aspirations of the small and interested ruling class in Egypt to the detriment of the welfare of the great mass of Egyptians—a submissive and amenable community—to whom the high official is inaccessible,

and whom many years of subjection have entitled to just and efficient rule.

Moreover, most of the arguments which I have seen adduced against a policy of annexation give the impression of recitals of the difficulties which lie in the way of its adoption rather than arguments against the policy itself. The only argument which really appeals is that to abolish the Protectorate would be a breach of faith. If this is so the Protectorate must stand. On the other hand Great Britain must be absolutely paramount in Egypt, and if annexation is necessary to ensure this, the question at issue is whether or not to face the difficulties and to attempt a real and lasting settlement of the problem rather than perpetuate a system which can never really be anything better than a compromise.

*Cairo, July 22, 1917.*

## CHAPTER XVIII

### 1917-18. POLITICAL DIFFICULTIES GATHERING STRENGTH

IN the midst of all these preoccupations, the ever-present and ever-vexing problem of the Capitulations, which had now for some time lain comparatively quiescent, again forced itself into prominence and received active consideration. The present, therefore, may be regarded as a convenient occasion for picking up the threads of the Capitulations story at the point where they were dropped in Chapter VIII.

It will be recalled that in the years just before the War, the authorities in England were anxious to settle this question as soon as possible by securing the agreement of France and Italy—and consequently of the other Powers—to the abrogation of the Capitulations. Kitchener had not for some time been inclined to give very detailed or careful consideration to the question, but in 1913 the Secretary of State had brought him to the point of setting up a Committee to examine the whole question of the Courts of Law, and—or at least so the Secretary of State hoped—to submit the necessary draft, laws, and decrees.

This Committee reported in 1914;<sup>1</sup> the report

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Viscount Kitchener to Sir E. Grey: May 27, 1914.

began by giving a very interesting description of the situation as it existed. It analysed the numbers and distribution of the various foreign communities as given in the census of 1907, and showed that these stood as follows in order of numerical superiority. Greeks 62,973, Italians 34,926, British 20,653, French 14,593, Austrians 7,704, Russians 2,410, Germans 1,847. There was thus one foreign resident in every seventy-six of the total population, but the distribution of the foreign communities was entirely uneven, and out of a total foreign population of 147,000 the governorates of Cairo, Alexandria, Port Said, Ismailia, and Suez contained 131,000. Thus in Port Said and Ismailia there was one foreign resident in every five of the inhabitants, in Alexandria one in six, in Suez one in seven, and in Cairo only one in twelve.

Then came an account of the existing judicial structure in Egypt, which may well be summarised here for the reader's information. It may be prefaced by recalling that there were four separate sets of judicial courts in Egypt, the Native Tribunals, the Mixed Tribunals, the Consular Courts, and the religious Courts, and that the object of reform was to do away with the Consular Courts and then to amalgamate into one jurisdiction the Native and Mixed Tribunals.

The Native Tribunals were competent to deal with all civil and criminal cases in which Egyptian or Ottoman subjects alone were involved. They were constituted as follows: the Judges of these Tribunals were of two kinds—Judges of the Court of Appeal, and Judges of the Tribunals of First Instance. Judges of the Court of Appeal sat only in chambers of three, either at the Court of Appeal, or at the Central



Tribunals, of which there were eight, to conduct criminal Assizes. The Judges of the Tribunals of First Instance sat in chambers of three at the Central Tribunals, or else in single-judge Courts, known as Summary Tribunals, in each Merkez.

The procedure followed in civil cases was that cases, where the suit was for a value of £100 or more, were referred first to a preparatory judge and then heard in First Instance by the Central Tribunals, and in final appeal by the Court of Appeal. Cases where the suit was for under £100 were heard by summary judges.

Criminal cases were divided into three classes of (a) "contraventions", offences for which the maximum punishment prescribed was not more than a week's imprisonment or a fine of one pound, (b) misdemeanour punishable with a longer term of imprisonment or a larger fine, (c) offences punishable with detention (*i.e.* imprisonment for more than three years), penal servitude, or death.

Of these, the first two classes were tried in first instance by Summary Tribunals, and in appeal by the Central Tribunal. The third class was tried, without right of appeal, by the Courts of Assize. In cases of both the second and third class, an appeal on points of law and procedure lay to the Court of Appeal sitting as a Court of Cassation.

Criminal cases could be instituted by the following methods. In cases belonging to the first two classes described above, a private person might, if he claimed damages, bring the person he accused directly before a Summary Tribunal, which then tried the case without preliminary enquiry. But the normal procedure in all three classes of cases was by way of the Parquet or Public Prosecutor's Department. Officers of this

department conducted a preliminary enquiry, which was of the nature of judicial proceedings, witnesses being obliged to attend and to give evidence on oath. They also conducted the prosecution when the case came for trial. When the preliminary enquiry was completed in cases of the first two classes, the Parquet were competent to commit for trial: in cases of the third class, the Parquet applied to a judge, who was delegated to act as committing Magistrate, and had power to dismiss the case, subject to appeal.

The Mixed Tribunals, which had been created by treaties between Egypt and the Powers, were competent in all civil cases to which a foreign subject was a party. They were also composed of Judges of the Court of Appeal and Judges of Tribunals of First Instance. The Court of Appeal sat at Alexandria in two Chambers, each consisting of five foreign and three Egyptian judges. There were three Central Tribunals of First Instance, one at Cairo, one at Alexandria, and one at Mansura, sitting in chambers of three foreign and two Egyptian judges. There were also Summary Tribunals of single judges sitting at the three Central Tribunals and at Port Said.

Cases relating to a value of under £100 were tried by a summary judge, and only if the value of the suit was above £10 was there a right of appeal to a Tribunal of First Instance. Where the sum involved was over £100, the case was tried by Tribunals of First Instance, and in appeal by the Court of Appeal.

Such was the Committee's description of the existing structure of the Native and Mixed Tribunals. Their recommendations for amalgamation need not be considered, because the outbreak of war caused them to be irretrievably pigeon-holed until

they were out of date, and because they were not in the form which the Secretary of State required.

He proceeded to point this out and to ask for a further report, which was forwarded in due course by Sir Henry MacMahon in 1916. At this date the position of Egypt had been, in the eyes of international law, fundamentally altered by the declaration of the protectorate, but for practical purposes it did not appear that the situation had been changed definitely and finally. As far, however, as the British authorities were concerned, they had pledged themselves in the declaration of December 1914 to the view that the Capitulations were out of date, and that they would take up the question of revision of the treaties at the end of the War: they also quite clearly regarded the protectorate as a permanent state of affairs, so that for them no reason existed why they should not envisage a convention, to be signed between France and Great Britain in the near future, whereby the positions respectively in Egypt and Morocco would be placed on a clear, satisfactory, and similar basis.

The next step, therefore, was to proceed with the large amount of preparatory work which would be necessary, and for this purpose a Capitulations Commission was set up in Egypt in March 1917, its task being to "*préconiser, dès à présent, les réformes, dans la législation et les institutions judiciaires et administratives du pays, que comportera la disparition éventuelle des Capitulations*". The task thus described was a large one, and bound to raise fundamental questions of policy. In fact, very soon after the death of Sultan Hussein and the accession of Sultan Fuad, the Egyptian Government began to show signs of being anxiously alive to the importance

of these questions, and two of the Ministers, Adly Pasha Yeghen and Sarwat Pasha, put forward the suggestion that it was now advisable in this connection to examine the whole question of legislative reform, and not merely the question of the reforms which would be consequential upon the disappearance of the Capitulations. The suggestion was adopted, and a special Commission was set up for the purpose towards the end of the year.

The desire for political concessions, which lay behind this suggestion, was also active in connection with the Cabinet changes which were proposed when Sultan Fuad became ruler. The Sultan was anxious to get rid of Fathy Pasha, the Minister of Waqfs, whom he personally disliked, and against whom he was ready to make charges of maladministration. He also acquainted the High Commissioner with his desire to find places in his Ministry for Zaghlul Pasha and Abdul Aziz Fahmy. The latter proposal was inspired by the Prime Minister, Rushdi Pasha, who was beginning to be anxious as to what his own position might be when normal times were restored, and wished to effect some form of insurance by allying himself with the more popular leaders. The High Commissioner was opposed to changes in the Ministry, for purely political reasons, at the present time. Apart from the fact that the two proposed new Ministers might introduce an uncertain element into the administration at a time when the fortunes of war were still critical, he took the view that a change in the political complexion of the Ministry, and the consequent implication that political demands were about to be made, would have a dangerously unsettling effect. The Prime Minister, on becoming acquainted with Wingate's firm views, receded from

his position, and the difficulty with the Sultan was overcome by the resignation of Fathy Pasha and the appointment of Ziwar Pasha in his place.

The work of the Capitulations Commission went on in an atmosphere which to all appearances was one of friendly co-operation. But the difficulties had only been temporarily smoothed over, and not eradicated. It was clear that the Sultan aspired to play an important rôle and that he was personally extremely ambitious. He began to endeavour to establish a control over individual Ministers, and when he was not successful in this, he showed a tendency to consult members of his personal entourage rather than his constitutional advisers. It was unlikely, therefore, that he could be counted upon to exercise a beneficial influence, and his conduct might even precipitate a crisis.

It was clear also that the demand for political concession was only postponed and was fast gathering momentum. The British and Egyptian members of the Capitulations Commission and the Special Commission might be working in a co-operation which appeared as smooth as could be desired, but this was only because a *casus belli* had not yet arisen. If the British officials were unaware of this, and still imagined that even the Council of Ministers held the same view as themselves as to the general objects to be aimed at, the Ministers themselves were by no means so infatuated. They were well aware of the feeling among the political classes, and it was a feeling which they themselves shared. They might still be active in the work of the Commissions, but only because the War was not yet over and therefore the moment for which the whole of Egypt had been waiting had not yet arrived. In reality they had no

intention of subscribing to any proposals involving the permanency of the British Protectorate, or the abrogation of the Capitulations at the cost of an increased measure of British control and interference. And as a matter of fact, the *casus belli* which the Prime Minister and Adly Pasha, his principal supporter in the Ministry, ultimately adopted, was one which arose directly out of the work of the Special Commission which was examining the question of constitutional reform.

Sir William Brunyate was at this time Judicial Adviser to the Government of Egypt, and it was natural that the brunt of the work in connection with the constitutional and legal questions now being discussed should fall on his shoulders. If this was fortunate from one point of view, from another, and perhaps a more important one, it was equally unfortunate. His scholastic career had been one of brilliant promise, and he possessed exceptional intellectual ability and practical efficiency. He was, besides, extremely hardworking and pertinacious. These were qualities which were bound to stand him in good stead in the early years of a career in Government service, and they had carried him as far as the position of Judicial Adviser. Unfortunately, he laid himself open to the charge of being "ponderous", a charge which implied some deficiency in humour and imagination; unfortunately also he at times allowed himself to be dictatorial even to his friends. The combination is a very dangerous one in our Imperial services: their undoubted good qualities carry such men inevitably to positions of great trust in which their deficiencies may at times endanger the cause which they serve. In Brunyate's case the danger was aggravated by the fact that Sir H.

MacMahon, unacquainted personally with Egypt, had had to rely a great deal upon his opinion, and this had perhaps enhanced his dictatorial inclinations.

For all these reasons, it was unfortunate that it was to him that the Prime Minister entrusted at this time a very delicate task. He was requested, in connection with the work of the Special Commission upon Constitutional Reform, to draw up a Note which might serve as a basis for discussion. The Note was to pay particular attention to the question of legislation affecting foreign residents, besides dealing with the whole question of reform. It was known that the Prime Minister was anxious that the intervention of Great Britain in the affairs of Egypt should be much restricted, *pari passu* with the abrogation of the Capitulations. It was known also that there was a genuine desire in the Council of Ministers and among the politically-minded classes for a settlement *de novo* of the relations between Britain and Egypt. In these circumstances Brunyate produced as might have been expected a very able Note.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately it entirely ignored the existence of aspirations which Ministers themselves entertained.

The Note began by reviewing in brief the past history of discussions upon constitutional reform. He found that Lord Cromer had been too ready to put up with bad administration, and his suggestion of relying upon the European colonies to agree to legislation affecting themselves had aroused considerable hostility. He found, on the other hand, that Sir Eldon Gorst had been too ready to efface himself and the British element in the administration: the result had been an appearance of weakness, and in consequence serious unrest. The appointment of

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Sir R. Wingate to Mr. Balfour: November 28, 1918.

Lord Kitchener had quickly amended the situation, but his legislative measures had been very crude in conception: he had had a natural interest in constitution-mongering, but was not technically equipped for the task. The essential fact was that political progress in Egypt had not kept pace with economic progress. The economic advancement of the country had been rapid and extensive: if its present position was to be maintained, it was essential that there should be in the administration a high standard of efficiency; and this high standard of efficiency could not be provided by free institutions. For growing prosperity had demanded a rapid growth in administrative machinery, with the result that there had been no time or opportunity for experiment and no leisure for training Egyptians adequately.

Of the proposals which the Note went on to make, the most important was for the creation of a new Legislature of two Chambers. Of these, the Upper Chamber was to contain Egyptian Ministers, British Advisers, and representatives of the foreign communities, elected by special electorates, so as to give expression to the special interests of those communities. This recommendation was made on the ground that the large and ever-growing commercial and financial interests of Egypt were to an overwhelming extent in foreign hands, while Egyptians themselves took little part in these economic activities and could not therefore with justice claim the sole power to legislate upon them.

The Note went on to propose that the Upper Chamber so constituted should have a preponderating voice, and that its opinion should prevail in regard to measures of legislation regarded as essential: a power of certification should reside with the Government,



but be exercised only with the approval of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The practical result of this suggestion would be that in the new constitution of Egypt preponderating power would be given to a Legislative Chamber composed very largely of non-Egyptians. It was, in fact, an attempt to put into practical shape the solution which Cromer had put forward in 1906. Cromer had believed that the only alternative to the capitulatory régime was a government truly representing all the races resident in the Nile Valley: in his view, any constitution framed on other lines would be little better than a sham.<sup>1</sup>

The suggestion had met with a very hostile reception on all sides in 1906: in 1918, if one thing was certain, it was that it would meet with absolutely no support at all from any Egyptian quarter. How could Egyptians, in the present state of feeling, be expected to consider even for a moment a suggestion that non-Egyptians should be given so much power under their constitution, and that His Majesty's Government should retain a veto over all their legislation?

It is true that the Note had only been put forward to form a basis for discussion, and that it was a "confidential" document, which would be discussed in confidence. It was true also that a great many of the arguments which it used were incontrovertible, and that the conclusions which were drawn were logically sound. If it had been accompanied by an equally accurate account of the state of public feeling in Egypt, it might have done good service as a memorandum for the confidential use of the Foreign Office and the Secretary of State. But as a basis for discussion in the Council of Egyptian Ministers, or in

<sup>1</sup> *Modern Egypt.*

any Commission on which they were represented, it was useless and contained grave elements of danger. As we shall see later it provided Rushdi Pasha with the very opportunity which he was seeking for bringing about a constitutional crisis.

But apart from that, it offered no conceivable solution of the real problem with which the British Government was faced. It was couched in the language, and thought out in the terms, of an era which had disappeared. At the very moment of its presentation in November 1918, the curtain which had descended upon pre-war Egypt was about to rise again, and to disclose to an astonished audience a setting and a drama for which they were entirely unprepared. How impenetrable had been that curtain, and how unprepared were the authorities, is shown, if by nothing else, at least by the very Note we have been considering: and we shall perhaps recapture something of the sudden bewilderment of that time, if we turn at once from it to look again at the stage which the curtain of war was now rising to disclose.

## CHAPTER XIX

### 1918. THE END OF THE WAR: BEGINNING OF POLITICAL STRUGGLE

IN the autumn months of 1918, the grim interlude was clearly drawing to an end, and those who sat waiting were expecting an orderly and familiar scene to reappear. They thought they were to have to do with a representative government, with a Council of Ministers, and a Ruler amenable to advice and able to control the people. But instead of representative government it was responsible government that was now in all men's thoughts; the Council of Ministers were to be swept off their feet at the very opening of the act, and carried in the flood in the wake of men who were demanding independence with a large measure of public support.

The change was indeed startling in its completeness and immensity. And its most dangerous and most startling aspect lay in the fact that it found the British authorities unprepared and unaware. We have seen how the exigencies of war had brought the British to take measures in Egypt of far-reaching importance without counting the future cost. We have had glimpses of the utterly unreal atmosphere in which the political problems arising in 1917 were discussed at Whitehall. And in the last

chapter we have seen that at least one high British official of large experience had become dangerously out of touch with the currents of thought which were now flowing strongly. Had this tendency been confined to Sir William Brunyate alone, there might have been little ground for despair: but, unfortunately, the state of blissful ignorance was more general, and was even more disastrously displayed in another quarter. Upon the Adviser to the Ministry of the Interior the High Commissioner had ultimately to depend for his knowledge of the general situation in Egypt, and of what was being said and thought by Egyptians among themselves: and at this time the incumbent of the post was not equal to his duties. Mr. Haines had shown himself zealous and competent as Inspector, and then as Chief Collector of Taxes, but during his long tenure of the latter post he had become completely out of touch with Europeans and the upper Egyptian classes. He had, however, been appointed by Sir Henry MacMahon, upon the advice of Lord Edward Cecil, as Adviser to the Interior. In this post he displayed little of his former zeal or competence, and refused to listen to any sort of criticism or advice, thus cutting off the High Commissioner from his chief source of information.

Unfortunately, also, the appointment was symptomatic of deterioration in other directions. It has already been recorded that even in Kitchener's time a tendency had set in towards a lowering of official quality. This tendency was terribly accelerated during the War, and went hand in hand with a deplorable increase in the number of British officials. Persons who had intimate knowledge of Egyptian administration in the past, when they happened to visit the country towards the end of the War, were

appalled to notice the decrease in quality and the increase in quantity of British officials in the Ministry of Finance. They felt that the nadir had been reached when to one Ministry were appointed two British officers with the title "liaison officers"—not, as might be supposed, to form a liaison with the outside world, but simply to maintain touch between two officials of different departments sitting in the same building. Meanwhile, there had been opening a very dangerous social gulf between Europeans and Egyptians. In the old days of Cromer there had been constant and friendly intercourse between the families of European officials and the upper class Egyptian families. But the deterioration in the quality and the increase in the quantity of English officials found these men and their families drawing apart from Egyptian society, holding together—at the Gezireh Club, for instance—and even regarding the presence of Egyptians there as ground for indignation. The general lack of touch with Egyptian life and thought was enhanced by the increasingly frequent absences of Mr. Storrs, who had been detached by Lord Kitchener to negotiate in the Red Sea and Arabia with Sherif, afterwards King Hussein, the Arab revolution and attack on the Turkish flank, the idea of which he had originally suggested to his chief; and, later, in Baghdad, as political liaison officer between the Egyptian and Mesopotamian Expeditionary Forces. With his departure at the end of 1917, on appointment as Military Governor of Jerusalem, there passed a link of personal sympathy, knowledge, and love of Egypt which was long regretted by Egyptian Society.

At the same time, the lack of organisation in the Residency itself was becoming very marked. Methods which had worked well enough in earlier days, broke

down completely when the staff grew larger and the pressure of work increased. There was no rational organisation in regard to matters of internal administration. Cases of current importance, upon which decisions were required, were passed quite fortuitously from one official to another; at each transfer the subject had to be explained again from the beginning, and the labour was generally lost, because the case was then transferred again. Those who were zealous enough to be concerned, and bold enough to suggest reorganisation, were brusquely invited to mind their own business. *Quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat*. As we read, we can hardly escape a feeling that the hand of Providence was at work, ensuring that the cataclysmic change in the Egyptian cosmos should catch the British unawares, lounging with rusted armoury in a fool's paradise.

The idea still seemed to be current that the Egyptians were thinking as they had thought in 1914. At that time the protectorate had been accepted at its face value: friends and foes alike regarded the decision as a permanent decision, and entertained no thoughts about its being reopened. But by 1917 a very different attitude was being taken up, and our declarations of 1914 were being closely questioned and reinterpreted, with a view to procuring a radical revision of the whole position. This revolution had been proceeding for many months, but the immediate cause of its becoming apparent in all its bitterness and irreconcilability was the incursion of America into world politics. When the principle of self-determination crossed the Atlantic in all the panoply of crusade, it was given a noble welcome, not only in Europe, but in every continent—save the American. In Europe, in Asia, and in

Africa it was enthusiastically agreed that America was coming to take charge of the Peace Conference, and that under the mighty guidance of America that Conference would arrange for every race and tribe and caste to be free from all interference and live happy ever after. Egyptians, at least, could not doubt that the great principle would be applied to them. They saw independence granted to the Arabs, whom they regarded as vastly inferior to themselves, and an Arab representative invited to the Conference. If the Arab was to be allowed to present his case, then, of course, it went without saying that the Egyptian should have the same chance. And, if he got that chance, who could doubt that he would secure the sympathy of America, and consequently the delightful freedom which America was so generously promising to the world at large.

On November 13, therefore, two days after the Armistice, Zaghlul Pasha, at the head of a deputation, presented himself at the Residency, and, claiming to speak on behalf of the whole Egyptian people, informed the High Commissioner that Egypt desired complete independence. Throughout the War, Zaghlul had not let slip the position of unofficial authority which he had won for himself in leading the opposition in the Assembly of 1914. At the outset he had adopted a reasonable and moderate attitude, counselling loyal co-operation: but he had thought it prudent to study the German language, and at the same time he had taken care to keep himself before the public, to whom his particular type of eloquence made a special appeal. Finally, during 1918 he had been working indefatigably to procure a strong and united demand among educated Egyptians for a radical revision of the relations between Egypt and

England. In this he had been to a large extent successful, so that while the Council of Ministers had been absorbed in their work carried out in close co-operation with the British civil and military authorities, and without desiring or requesting any expression of public opinion, Zaghlul, unfettered by responsibilities of office, had had a free hand to mobilise and attach to himself that same public opinion.

Sir Reginald Wingate's position was therefore one of difficulty. If he received the deputation he might, and in fact did, lay himself open to the charge of creating an impression that the Ministers no longer represented public opinion. It was his duty at all costs to maintain the prestige of the Prime Minister and his colleagues, and in order to do this it was preferable not to shrink from any danger of rebuffing Zaghlul, with all his acknowledged influence and popularity. What he actually did was to receive the deputation, the purpose of whose visit apparently took him by surprise, and to tell them in reply that the policy of His Majesty's Government had not been made known to him, so that he was not in a position to answer their demand. He made no reference to the constitutional position, did not point out that the Council of Ministers were the accredited representatives of Egypt and that questions of Egypt's foreign relations could only be discussed with them. He appears, in fact, hardly to have realised the full implications of this visit, and the demands which Zaghlul put before him were certainly startling enough. They constituted a programme of complete autonomy for Egypt, reserving to Great Britain only the supervision of the country's public debt, and certain special facilities in regard to the Suez Canal.

To accept the claim of the delegation to speak for



Egypt was, therefore, to admit an impossible demand and to cut the ground from under the feet of the Prime Minister. The latter's attitude at this time was very different from that of Zaghlul. He and the Ministers made no definite demands, but at the same time announced their desire to reopen the whole question of the interpretation of the protectorate by negotiation as soon as possible.

To Zaghlul's first move the High Commissioner had countered by replying that he was not in a position to announce the intentions of His Majesty's Government. Zaghlul's next move became obvious at once, and within two or three days he asked the High Commissioner for permission to proceed with his colleagues to London to lay their case directly before His Majesty's Government. This request was reported to the Secretary of State, who directed in terms of considerable sternness that it should be refused. The engagement now became general and developed with great rapidity. Zaghlul having been temporarily ordered off, the Prime Minister seized the opportunity which thus presented itself, and suggested that he and his colleague, Adly Pasha Yeghen, should proceed to London to discuss the Egyptian question with the Government of Great Britain. It was a proposal which had the support of the High Commissioner and which the Government might have been wise to accept. Had the Ministers in question been permitted to leave Egypt, public interest would have been focussed upon them, and would have paid diminished attention to Zaghlul. The important thing now was to restore the position of the Ministers and reinstate them in Egyptian public opinion, and an excellent occasion was presenting itself. It was not taken. Perhaps it could not have

been. In any case the Secretary of State very courteously, but very firmly, pointed out that on all grounds it would be inopportune for Egyptian Ministers to visit London in the circumstances existing. His Majesty's Secretaries of State would not themselves be in London, but would be busy elsewhere with the negotiations for peace, and would therefore have no leisure, until a much later date, for the purpose of discussing the internal problems of Egypt.

This reply left the field open for Zaghlul, who proceeded with the utmost energy and determination to consolidate his position. The British Government was not prepared to negotiate with the Prime Minister of Egypt; he himself was right, therefore, to be stiff in his demands and energetic in his efforts to rally the nation. He began at once to develop his campaign. Local committees were formed, public meetings were organised throughout Egypt, and signatures were collected wholesale for a mandate investing Zaghlul and his associates with authority to act on behalf of the Egyptian nation. It was a foregone conclusion that the campaign would be successful. High prices and a scarcity of commodities were breeding discontent in the town populations: the fellaheen were burning with grievances of which the tale has already been told.

The Ministers realised at once that there was now no hope for them, unless they fell in with the general movement, Rushdi Pasha had already made use of Brunyate's Note to strengthen his demand to be allowed to proceed to London, and in an endeavour to restore his own position in the sympathies of the people. He must now take more desperate steps still, and he and Adly tendered their resignations, as the only course open to them in the circumstances.

Although the real dangers of these developments were still not at all foreseen, the gravity of the situation was such that Wingate felt compelled to make one more effort to restore equilibrium. His advice, which although perhaps belatedly given had throughout been in favour of the Prime Minister's proposal,<sup>1</sup> had been rejected. Again, however, he returned to the charge and at last persuaded the Secretary of State to fix a date early in 1919 when he would be prepared to receive Rushdi and Adly in London. Unfortunately it was too late. Rushdi Pasha had a clear perception of the dangers which now surrounded him. Zaghlul had gained the ear of Egypt: if he himself went to London, while Zaghlul remained at home, whatever he brought back would be repudiated with scorn and his influence would be entirely destroyed. He now, therefore, hardened his demands and insisted that he would not go to London unless Zaghlul went too and shared responsibility with him. The High Commissioner was inclined to agree with him: he had always regarded it as wise to let Zaghlul proceed on his journey, and he still saw no serious objection to the demand, but His Majesty's Government firmly adhered to their previous decision. They were perfectly prepared to welcome the Prime Minister and to listen to him, as soon as their preoccupation with other more important business permitted, but they could not countenance the journey to London or elsewhere, of Nationalist politicians, not representative of Egypt, carrying extreme demands. As soon as this decision was delivered to Rushdi Pasha, he and his whole Council resigned their offices on March 1, 1919, with the full approval

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Sir R. Wingate to Mr. Balfour: November 17, 1918.  
F.O. Despatch: Sir R. Wingate to Lord Hardinge: November 19, 1918.

of Sultan Fuad. The most that Wingate could do, to bring about some possibility of escape from this impasse, was to arrange that he himself should press personally for the withdrawal of the bar on the movements of Zaghlul, and that if he were successful the Ministers would be ready to return to office and to accept the invitation to London.

The situation was now rapidly approaching the point at which it must boil over. Zaghlul's propaganda, though conducted outwardly upon strictly constitutional lines, was acting very dangerously to produce a general ferment. Patriotism had been outraged by the refusal to hear the views of Egyptians, although Syrians, Cypriots, and Arabs were freely converging upon the Peace Conference, there to state their views, without let or hindrance. Mahomedan feeling was excited by the possibility of absorption at such a juncture in a Christian Empire. The masses had many real grievances which, they could easily be persuaded, were due to British control. All classes in fact were only too ready to be stirred by inflammatory propaganda into action so violent that the propagandists themselves were taken unawares. But as far as the Nationalists were concerned, it must in fairness be said that they knew perfectly well what they were about and what the situation was: their business was to raise a storm, not to be over-careful as to whether they could control it.

The British authorities in Egypt, on the other hand, cannot be freed from blame. It does not appear that even to the last they were ever alive to the extent of the danger which threatened. The advice which the High Commissioner tendered to the Secretary of State was undoubtedly sound, but it was scarcely given with the force or insistence which

might have ensured it a hearing, and, most unfortunate of all, was never accompanied by an adequate description of the dangers to be feared. It was never made plain to Whitehall that a situation was developing so critical that only the utmost caution and forethought could prevent disaster. Indeed, it is clear that neither the civil nor the military authorities in Egypt realised this themselves. To the very last they reported that there was no real danger: to the last they neglected to take precautions against the possibility. Indeed, barely two weeks before the commencement of the grave riots of March 1919, Sir Milne Cheetam, acting High Commissioner, complacently reported to Lord Curzon not only that Rushdi and Adly Pasha had lost the momentary popularity acquired by their resignations, but that Saad Zaghlul himself was "trusted by no one". He went on to say, in reference to the Nationalist leaders: "the agitation which they have organised is dying out, or is at any rate quiescent in the country at large. A noteworthy feature is that this agitation has from the beginning been entirely pacific in character. . . . We still, no doubt, have to reckon with discontent among the upper classes, the landed proprietors, and professional elements. Most of these people vaguely desire some form of autonomy, which would make them individually more important, but the situation does not seem to me to differ materially from that of 1914 when Prince Hussein and the leading Ministers refused for a long time to accept a protectorate without concessions which we were not able to make. . . . The present movement, however, cannot be compared in importance with that of Mustapha Kamel, and there seems no reason why it should affect the decisions of H.M.'s Government on constitutional

questions and the proper form to be given to the protectorate." <sup>1</sup>

In these circumstances, the Foreign Office cannot justly be blamed for the manner in which they handled the affairs of Egypt. It must be recognised at once that the full gravity of the position was at no time explained to them: that they felt, not without reason, that the first, and by far the most important, duty which lay upon them at this time was the negotiation of peace: and that they quite honestly did not regard the Egyptian question as coming within the purview of that negotiation. They were prepared, as soon as they had leisure, conscientiously to take up the development of constitutional reform in Egypt, but for them this was an imperial and not an international question.

Holding this view, it was perfectly natural that they should allow themselves to feel righteously indignant with the Nationalists, whose country and liberties had been sheltered from the horrors of war by British arms, for advancing unacceptable demands; with the Prime Minister for persistently pressing the claims of Egypt at so inopportune a moment; even with the High Commissioner for not appearing to realise that the Foreign Office had matters of world-wide importance on hand, by comparison with which the Egyptian question seemed but a parish affair.

They regarded all these demands as instances of the selfish ingratitude of Egyptians, and they would have been justified in doing so if Egypt had really been in the position in which they saw her. But Egypt most emphatically did not regard herself as an Imperial problem. In her view the whole position had

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Sir M. Cheetham to Lord Curzon: February 24, 1919.

been altered by the wide promises of freedom and independence which the War had brought forth.

For her, therefore, the Peace Conference was the body which would decide her fate. She, like Palestine, Mesopotamia, and Arabia, was one of the countries which in the vicissitudes of a war with which she was not primarily concerned, had been wrested from one belligerent by another. The peace which those belligerents were now making would therefore settle her fate, and to her it was an injustice and a breach of faith that Great Britain should refuse her permission to attend the Conference or should act as if the question did not fall within its terms of reference. To Egyptians the two matters of gratitude to Great Britain and of pressing their claims to be heard immediately and insistently had no sort of connection. At the Conference, as even the Prime Minister Rushdi asserted, "*il va être procédé au règlement de toutes les questions soulevées par la guerre*". If theirs was not "*une question soulevée par la guerre*," what was it? A protectorate certainly would not have been declared but for the War. It was, therefore, a matter of supreme importance to their whole future that their views should be heard before the terms of peace were negotiated. And this importance was apparently very much enhanced by the American declarations of principle. When the resettlement of the whole belligerent world was being arranged upon a programme of self-determination, any responsible Egyptian who did not demand with all his force to be heard was a traitor to his country of the grossest kind.

Here was a divergence of view so complete that there seemed no possible point of contact. Lord Balfour wrote upon the subject to the High Com-

missioner as follows: "His Majesty's Government desire to act on the principle which they have always followed of giving the Egyptians an ever-increasing share in the government of the country. . . . As you are well aware, the stage has not been reached at which self-government is possible. His Majesty's Government have no intention of abandoning their responsibilities for order and good government in Egypt, and for protecting the rights and interests both of the native and of the foreign populations of the country."<sup>1</sup> This was a very definite statement of policy, clearly based on the assumption that England was the ruler and Egypt the ruled.

Zaghlul, at the same time, was addressing to the assembled representatives at the Peace Conference a Memorandum upon the rights of Egypt, which recalled the many assurances given by Great Britain that her occupation was merely temporary; which pointed out that the declaration of a British Protectorate was a unilateral declaration to which Egyptian consent had neither been asked nor obtained: which finally demanded full national independence for Egypt.

So armed, the two protagonists stood forth. Zaghlul's case was plausible enough, but he was at fault in two respects. He had miscalculated the attitude of the Peace Conference, and in common with many other peoples who had once been components of the Turkish Empire, he had grievously miscalculated the extent to which America would practise what she preached. It is curious now to recall the often-forgotten fact that Armenians, Mesopotamians, Syrians, Palestinians, at that time pinned all their faith to America. They hoped, how pathetically,

<sup>1</sup> F.O. Despatch: Mr. Balfour to Sir R. Wingate: November 27, 1918.



that America would become their tutor and give the world an object lesson in the disinterested nurture and education of weak races struggling towards freedom. America utterly refused the rôle for which they cast her, which Great Britain, war-weary and overburdened, would have been glad then to see her take, and she lost little time in recognising the British Protectorate over Egypt, to which country she did not at all favour the application of her President's principles.

But if Zaghlul did not know the attitude of the assembly at Paris, he knew all about the situation in Egypt, and it was in that knowledge that his strength lay. For the British Government and the British authorities in Egypt were labouring under a lamentable ignorance of that situation, and yet were busily arranging that the battle should be fought in that field. Had they allowed the Egyptian leaders to proceed to Paris and waste their strength in combat there, it can hardly be doubted that they would have met with a disheartening rebuff, and would have returned to their own country discouraged and discredited. In Paris the British Government would have been on strong ground and the Egyptians' weakness would have been exposed to themselves. In Egypt the Nationalists were masters of the situation, and could only have been frustrated by a strong and determined Government, well-informed as to the situation and well prepared to meet it. And that was exactly what the British Government was not. The battle was now, however, relegated by their action to Egypt. Zaghlul by an energetic campaign had roused the country to fever pitch. The Prime Minister and his Cabinet had resigned and nobody could be found to take their places, so that the

Government was perforce being carried on by permanent officials. Sultan Fuad was known to approve of the step which his Ministers had taken. The High Commissioner had left for London, whither he had been summoned by the Secretary of State, prepared to recommend, with accustomed wisdom, but as usual, unavailingly, that the Nationalist leaders should be given their passports and welcomed to London.

The next move was to be looked for from Zaghlul himself, who could not be expected to accept passively the latest refusal of his request, and it was a move which might be supremely important.

## CHAPTER XX

### 1919. THE CRISIS: ITS DISASTROUS ISSUE

THE opening days of the month of March found Egypt seething with excitement. Even the British authorities were becoming alive to the fact that the situation was not devoid of reasons for alarm. They were beginning to fear that the agitation which the Party of Independence was carrying on might endanger the public peace, and they were considering whether occasion might not be taken to restrain Zaghlul and the other leaders. In reality all the elements of a first-class conflagration were, as we have seen, already assembled: nothing but the igniting spark was lacking, and that was on the point of being applied. Zaghlul did not, indeed could not, remain inactive. On March 3 he sought an interview with the Sultan, and left at the palace a petition which was couched in threatening terms and clearly constituted an attempt to deter the ruler of Egypt, by intimidation, from any endeavour to form a new Government. Sir Milne Cheetham, who was acting as High Commissioner at the time, saw in this step clear evidence that Zaghlul had cast all restraint to the wind, and feared that in such a mood the Nationalist leader would soon be led to resort to more violent measures. He therefore lost no time in re-

commending that he should be deported to Malta, and to this the Secretary of State agreed. Before the step was taken, a warning was issued to Zaghlul in person and nine other leading members of the Party of Independence by General Watson, then commanding the forces in Egypt. The warning, which was delivered on the evening of March 6, was unmistakably clear in its terms: it reminded the Nationalist leaders of the existence of martial law, and directed them to abstain forthwith from an agitation which was only too likely to promote disorder. They appear to have been taken completely by surprise, but on the following day they published an answer to the warning, which clearly showed that they were in no mood to listen to authority. On the 8th, therefore, Saad Pasha Zaghlul, and with him Hamid Pasha el Bassal, Ismail Pasha Sidki, and Mohamed Pasha Mahmoud, were arrested: the following morning they were taken to Alexandria and placed on board a British destroyer, to be carried to Malta. Of these four, only one, Hamid Pasha el Bassal, had not held high office in the Government, but he was a village magnate of great influence in the Fayoum. Ismail Pasha Sidki had been a Minister during the earlier years of the War, but had lost office owing to circumstances which had created much stir at the time. Mohamed Mahmoud had risen to be governor of a province, but had been dismissed from his post, unfairly as many thought, because his method of wielding authority was not free from suspicion of high-handedness.

The arrest of these four men set the conflagration alight. The students, as always in the East, were the first to stir. When the news spread on the morning of the 9th, they deserted their studies and dispersed

through the streets, carrying the torch of disturbance everywhere with them. That very evening acts of sabotage were occurring, and the following morning disorderly crowds were destroying property and buildings, and the military had to be called upon to help the police. On the 11th, the situation was changing for the worse: a strike of lawyers was concerted, and some officials deserted their posts in sympathy: while clashes between angry crowds and the troops and police were frequent.

By March the 12th the provinces were alight: there were outbreaks at Tanta, where the military had to open fire in order to repel an attack upon the railway station, at Zagazig, Damanhour, and Mansura. The trouble then spread with rapidity all over the Delta and into Upper Egypt. By the 17th Cairo was completely cut off from the rest of Egypt: the railway lines had been destroyed, telegraph and telephone wires cut. In Alexandria, continuous riots were taking place; in almost every other important centre the military were in conflict with the people and could do little more than hold precariously some point of vantage, while elsewhere over the Delta anarchy reigned. In Upper Egypt the position was equally serious: where there were detachments of troops they were beleaguered and cut off, and all pretence of government was at an end.

This was the situation which faced General Bulfin when he arrived in Cairo to take command on the evening of March 17. It could only be dealt with by vigorous action, for there was no longer any pretence in any quarter that the Nationalist leaders who had raised the storm were at all capable of controlling it. The time for negotiation had long ago passed, and General Bulfin at once began to concert energetic

action. Mobile columns were formed out of the troops at his disposal, but while his preparations were maturing, mob law continued its reign in Egypt, with widespread destruction of property and loss of life.

On the morning of the 18th, just after General Bulfin's arrival at Cairo, there occurred the outrage at Deirut, in which eight Englishmen were murdered by a frenzied crowd with every circumstance of brutality. These men, three officers and five non-commissioned officers, were travelling by train from Luxor. After they left Assiut on the morning of the 18th, crowds collected at every station to threaten and insult them. At Deirut, the train was rushed, and the crowd forced an entry into the carriage in which they were travelling: what happened thereafter—to what torture they were submitted—shall not be told. But on arrival at Deir Mowas, the sufferings of the whole party had finally been put an end to by death. Their bodies, horribly mutilated, were left in the train, to be greeted with exultant frenzy at each station through which the train passed, until finally at Minieh they were taken from the carriage and buried.

Upper Egypt, the last to catch alight, burned now with a fiercer intensity. The Bedouins from the west were advancing in large numbers upon the settled areas. At Minieh the British residents were surrounded and in imminent danger: at Assiut all the foreign subjects sought refuge in one building, which was with difficulty defended by a small detachment of Punjabis, and it was not until the 25th that they were relieved by one of the columns despatched by General Bulfin.

By that time the task of restoration was well under

way. On the 22nd a report arrived that the Kaliub Province had been restored to complete calm and that in more remote provinces of the Delta matters were rapidly improving. On the 23rd, the main railway lines to the north of Cairo were reported to be repaired, and a regular service of trains was again running.

On the 29th more satisfactory news at last began to arrive from Upper Egypt. Assiut was in process of pacification, and a strong column was moving south from Wasta, suppressing disorder and restoring the reign of law.

Before the month of April had been running more than a few days, the appearance of organised military forces had produced the desired result: by the 10th, the work of reinstalling the civil authorities was reported to be almost everywhere complete. The rebellion had not yet been killed, but it had been scotched, and the forces of anarchy had been defeated. And there is little doubt that had the military authorities under General Bulfin's very able guidance been allowed to complete the work so well begun the whole matter might have been brought to a swifter and more satisfactory conclusion.

The outbreak had been unanticipated; it had taken the authorities completely by surprise, and they were now busy in searching for a theory to account for it. They reported that it was probable that a rebellious movement had been in process of organisation for some years, having no connection with the Nationalist agitation of the last few months, and that behind it was "a hidden hand".<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Movement is anti-British, anti-Sultanian, and anti-foreign. It has Bolshevik tendency, aims at destruction of property as well as communications, is organised and must be paid. Extraneous influence is strongly suspected. British officials incline to the belief that, whatever Nationalist instigation

It was perhaps inevitable that they should seek in this way to console themselves for their ignorance of conditions precedent,<sup>1</sup> but it had a very disastrous result. Their anxious ruminations, added to the alarming reports of anarchy and destruction in Egypt, stirred the authorities in England to an intervention which was ill-timed and ill-advised.

At this time the situation in Egypt was responding to the only possible treatment: the prudent and soldierly dispositions taken by General Bulfin were already meeting with success, and it was confidently expected by all the well-informed and experienced that within a very short space of time the trouble would be over and the Egyptian problem would be approaching a genuine solution. It was at this very juncture that Mr. Lloyd George, who was then in Paris, busy with the Peace Conference, suddenly decided summarily to supersede Sir R. Wingate in Egypt and to appoint General Allenby, who was also in Paris, as special High Commissioner in his place. On March 25, General Sir Edmund Allenby

there may have been in last few months, the feeling now exhibited must have been growing during several years, and that an explosion at some time was inevitable." The above is quoted from a despatch of Sir M. Cheetham to Lord Curzon, dated March 9, 1919.

"Evidence was soon forthcoming that the plan of campaign had been carefully premeditated and organised . . . it is worth noting that the plan carried out corresponds to the programme drawn up by the Germans and Young Turks for an attack in the autumn of 1914, which was revealed to the Egyptian authorities by the German spy, Mors, captured at Alexandria. . . . But when every allowance has been made for the state of mind and sense of grievance (among the fellaheen) depicted above, they are not sufficient to account for the present serious and organised outbreak, in which the hand of the Young Turk, and even German agent, is clearly discernible." From Memorandum on the Unrest in Egypt, dated April 9, 1919.

<sup>1</sup> " . . . However this may be, the Anglo-Egyptian authorities appear to have been so greatly out of touch with native sentiment that such statements must be accepted with reserve. They have, indeed, shown a complete lack of foreknowledge for which it is almost impossible to account. . . ." Memorandum on Unrest in Egypt, dated April 9, 1919.



arrived in Cairo "directed to exercise supreme authority in all matters military and civil, to take all such measures as he considers necessary and expedient to restore law and order, and to administrate in all matters as required by the necessity of maintaining the King's Protectorate over Egypt on a secure and equitable basis".

The overdriven Cabinet, entirely perplexed by the reports of its advisers in Egypt, had seized upon the nearest officer, whose reputation and personality invited their confidence, and sent him out with wide discretionary powers. They said, in effect: "Here is a very dreadful and puzzling situation in Egypt: you are the man to deal with it. Go and do so, and meanwhile we shall be able to get on without interruption with our extremely important task here".

Sir Edmund Allenby's general reputation as a soldier was high and well-deserved: as civil administrator he had yet to prove himself, and it was as an administrator that he was sent to Cairo. Sir Reginald Wingate, who had had a long experience of administration of Egypt, was tacitly shelved; yet his known qualifications for the task were better than those of anyone who could be suggested to succeed him.

On the date of General Allenby's arrival in Cairo—March 25—the situation in Egypt was mending fast, but so widespread a conflagration could not, of course, be quenched in a moment: as a matter of fact, Sir John Shea's column, operating in Upper Egypt, did not reach Assuan till April 18, and even after that date there was still sporadic resistance to the forces of government. The first task, therefore, was to restore the ascendancy of civil government, to reduce completely all the elements of anarchy and violence, and only when the power of the administration was

clearly supreme and unassailable to discuss the removal of grievances.

But the Special High Commissioner freshly instructed from home acted upon another view of the situation. Immediately upon arrival he began to enter into negotiation with Egyptian elements, seeking conditions of compromise. On March 31, he issued a proclamation announcing that in his view "the time has come when responsible Egyptians with the interest of their country at heart should submit to him a statement showing what steps they consider necessary to restore tranquillity and content".

There was apparently little doubt in the minds of responsible Egyptians as to what steps were necessary. Release Zaghlul and his fellow deportees and all would be well. The Committee of Independence naturally took this view; the ex-Ministers were prepared to endorse it and to resume office again if it were accepted. Was it barely possible that it would be accepted? Even they could hardly have hoped that at a time when open rebellion was still active and the energetic operation of military forces was still necessary to counter it, the responsible authority would be prepared to surrender to the demands of those whose activities had fomented the rebellion. Yet, startling as it must have been, all and more than they demanded was at once conceded. On April 7, a proclamation appeared under the signature of the Special High Commissioner announcing that the four deportees would be released from internment at Malta—and not only that, but that they would be free to travel whither they pleased.

It is difficult to justify this surrender to the forces of disorder. However unwise and unjust might have been the decision to deport the four leaders, or the

decision to refuse them passports, the reversal of those two decisions at such a moment was certain to be given one interpretation and one only: that violence had succeeded where constitutional methods had failed. General Allenby's position in Egypt may have been—undoubtedly was—one of supreme complexity. To one with no previous experience of Eastern administration, the difficulties of governing Egypt outside the constitution may have seemed insuperable. He had been sent out with full discretionary powers and with instructions to bring an intolerable situation to an end as quickly as possible. The whole Egyptian nation appeared to be united in one particular demand which, although in very different circumstances, had at one time been supported by his predecessor. A hurried glance—the only one possible to the newcomer in such circumstances—seemed clearly to indicate that this demand was not unreasonable, and further, that to concede it would leave Egypt without a grievance. If this was the process of reasoning which won the day, it overlooked one all-important fact which now dominated the whole situation. Whether deliberately, or simply in disregard of consequence, the weapon of violence had been adopted: and until that weapon had been struck from the hand of Egypt and conclusively shown to be valueless, there could not safely be any talk of negotiation or concession. Of this view later circumstances have been one long confirmation.

In order to arrive at a just and impartial view of this critical decision, it is absolutely essential at this point to study the situation in close detail, not only in the aspect which it now presents to us with our fuller knowledge, but in the aspect which it presented to the authorities at the time. The fundamental cause of

the failure to maintain control of the situation is, unfortunately, not difficult to discover, for it was admitted at the time—and the view is confirmed by all the sources of information now available—that the British advisers in Egypt were entirely ignorant in regard to the situation with which they had to deal,<sup>1</sup> and consequently that they completely misled the Foreign Office as to the gravity of its possibilities. The only consolation which they could take to themselves was the knowledge that upon the question of the proposed visit of Egyptian Ministers to England they had given sound advice. They could urge in mitigation of the charge against them that had that advice been taken earlier, instead of being several times rejected, the situation might have been saved.

When the crisis showed signs of developing, there were two courses of action which must from the beginning have presented themselves for selection. The first was to concede the demand put forward both by the Prime Minister and the extremist leaders and allow both to come to London. Upon their arrival it should have been possible to differentiate the treatment accorded to the two parties so as to restore the prestige and position of Rushdi Pasha as the accredited representative of the Egyptian nation. The second course open to the Government was the one which was, in fact, chosen by them: to accept the challenge of the extremist leaders, to treat them as revolutionaries, and to deal firmly with the consequences. The advantages which might accrue from taking the first course may be fairly described as follows: While Rushdi Pasha and his colleagues would have been won over to the side of moderation by a courteous and attentive reception in London,

<sup>1</sup> *Vide* footnote 1, p. 301 *ante*.

Zaghlul and his companions would have been removed from the scene where their activities could be really dangerous: with every day that they remained away, their influence in Egypt would have declined, and the attention of Egyptians would have been diverted from them and focussed upon the official activities of the Prime Minister. The view was authoritatively held at the time that the present outbreak might possibly have been avoided, but would more likely only have been postponed. There were experienced observers who believed that the Nationalist leaders, fully conscious of the power and organisation of the forces behind them, would not have submitted to humiliation without sooner or later bringing matters to a trial of strength. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the postponement of a battle for which one is entirely unprepared is itself an immense gain: and it is clear that had nothing more than postponement been secured, the trial of strength, when it came, would have found constitutional authority in a much stronger and Zaghlul in a much weaker position.

On the whole, it seems fair to conclude, in the light of the information which we now possess, that the first course was the one which ought to have been selected. But, at the same time, it must be admitted that no Government possessing information of so scanty and inaccurate a nature as that furnished by the Anglo-Egyptian authorities could have done otherwise than choose the second course.

The final disaster arose not from this choice of course, but from the fact that Government suddenly and quite inexplicably allowed their course to be diverted and did not see it through to the end. Although previously, when they still had no reason to

suspect the knowledge of the authorities on the spot, they had several times refused their advice and taken independent decisions: although now they were aware that General Allenby's principal advisers were entirely out of touch and that their intelligence system had broken down; in spite of this, by authorising the release of Zaghlul, they allowed their own deliberately chosen policy to be reversed and nullified before it had had time to prove itself.

The course which was followed becomes all the more inexplicable when it is realised that His Majesty's Government and their advisers in Whitehall were fully aware of the dangers which such a course of action must involve. Although Sir Reginald Wingate had been so unjustly and discourteously superseded, his advice was still eagerly sought for by the Foreign Office, and his selflessness and well-known devotion to the public interest were never better illustrated than in the memorandum in which he records his appreciation of the situation confronting government, and his views as to the action which the interests of Egypt and the Sudan severally required. "I pointed out", he writes, "that the psychological moment, when permission to the Nationalists to leave Egypt might have been efficacious, had passed, and I urged the issue of a proclamation declaring that the only method by which the agitators could gain a hearing was by at once returning to law and order, and that they had been guilty of the grossest breaches of the law, for which they must take the consequences. But I suggested that the severity of such a proclamation might be tempered by a promise that when the authorities had been fully convinced that law and order had been restored, that the agitators were repentant and had given an assur-

ance (in writing) that they would never again transgress the law by such methods, His Majesty's Government would favourably consider the despatch of a Commission to consider on the spot the question of the nature of the protectorate and kindred questions respecting the future government of Egypt. In any circumstances, I pointed out that a strong garrison would be required, but that under no circumstances should there be any idea of giving way to the agitators *after* they had been guilty of such gross breaches of the law. To this view I entirely adhere, and I must offer it as my very carefully-considered opinion, and after a long experience of administration in Egypt and the Sudan, that to give way *immediately*, as is now suggested, would be fraught with the gravest dangers, not only to the maintenance of our position in Egypt, but to the whole of our North African possessions. The Nationalists will say, and with justice, that by agitation and intimidation they have forced the hands of His Majesty's Government, and I do not think that it is going too far to say that we shall have practically abandoned the position in Egypt which we have acquired after years of patient toil and labour. For the moment peace and order can doubtless be restored by the suggested methods, and the agitators will not fail to give instructions in this sense to their partisans, but our real power and authority will have practically gone and we shall be at the mercy of agitators at any time they care to repeat the methods by which they will say they have obtained their ends in the present crisis. I am confident that anyone who has had prolonged experience of ruling Orientals, and especially Egyptians, will concur in my views, and I feel it incumbent on me to express, in the strongest terms, my dissent from the

proposed acquiescence of His Majesty's Government in these proposals." Moreover, the official record contains the following pithy comment upon the release:

"The trial of strength has now taken place, and the British authorities in Egypt, armed with full discretionary powers, have shown themselves unable or unwilling to stand up to the forces arrayed against them. The principle at issue has been surrendered. . . . a fortnight's violence has achieved what four months of persuasion failed to accomplish. The object-lesson will not be lost in Egypt and throughout the East." <sup>1</sup>

The object-lesson has indeed not been lost. But if this was the opinion of the Government at home, we are bound to ask why they permitted a policy to be adopted in Egypt which they knew to be fraught with such general and far-reaching consequences of evil? How is it possible to explain the conduct of those who acquiesced, knowing by their own admission that acquiescence would be disastrous? Whether from an over-driven preoccupation with other matters, or from the sheer weakness of exhaustion, the Cabinet decided to cast all the responsibility upon their representative at Cairo and did not intervene to prevent a blunder from which British policy in Egypt, if not elsewhere, has never since recovered.

The immediate results in Egypt were astounding and must have brought intense gratification to those who were responsible. Cairo, up to April 3, had been constantly vibrating with riot and bloodshed, and on that day had been the scene of an ugly clash between troops and the people, in which lives had been lost. The proclamation announcing that the deportees

<sup>1</sup> Memorandum on Unrest in Egypt, dated April 9, 1919.



would be released was issued on the 7th, and immediately the mobs who had been rioting and fighting were transformed into crowds of exultant holiday-makers. Demonstrations of rejoicing were everywhere organised, and on April 9 Rushdi Pasha took office again as Prime Minister, pledged to co-operate with the British authorities in the restoration of order. The triumph of the new policy was, however, short-lived. The situation, as such situations usually do, had long before got beyond the control or even the knowledge of moderate elements, and the extremists, who had stepped into the lead with the first outbreak of violence, were now confirmed in their authority and prestige by the apparent success of the methods they advocated. Their demands at once hardened and their activities increased. On April 9, the military were again in collision with the crowds, and between that day and the 11th there was a sinister crop of murderous assaults upon isolated Europeans. The campaign of violence had proceeded to the inevitable next step. Strikes were organised everywhere—strike-breakers were violently attacked and intimidated; a National Police Force, so-called, was set up, which endeavoured to usurp the authority of the Government forces, and there was a sudden outpouring of pamphlets and broadsheets containing fierce attacks upon the traitors who dared to hold moderate views or refused to take orders from the Nationalists. Those who followed closely the history of India during 1930 will recognise almost identical steps in the development of disorder; the similarity is both alarming and instructive.

If the policy failed to put an end to violence, it failed also to secure the co-operation of an Egyptian Cabinet. A strike of officials had been in progress

since April 3; it was in process of being broken by the victory of moderate views when the proclamation of surrender was issued. The pendulum immediately swung over to the extremists. Government officials were persuaded to stay away from work in order to celebrate the triumph of violence, and were then persuaded not to return until they had obtained, from the Cabinet which Rushdi Pasha was now attempting to form, assurances that the demands of the Nationalist Party would be satisfied. Few people, and least of all the recalcitrant officials, now knew what those demands were, but none the less the extremist victory was complete and overwhelming. The Prime Minister would be expending all his energies in the vain task of trying to persuade the officials to return to work. The officials would not dare to return until the extremists announced that they were satisfied, and extremists are never satisfied. Rushdi Pasha went to work with the most praiseworthy industry and patience, but the demands he was asked to satisfy were of course plainly impossible—amounting as they did to the supersession of Government by its own servants. The extremists were now in command of a situation which they exploited to the full; appeals and warnings and conciliatory interviews took up all the time of Ministers, whose efforts were held up to ridicule and were foredoomed to failure. Rushdi Pasha's patience gave way at last, and on April 21 he resigned again. For twelve days the British authorities had had the comfort of co-operation with an Egyptian Cabinet formed under the constitution. Now even that exiguous and tepid consolation was gone again, and the Special High Commissioner was left, not only without a Government, but without administrative

services. He was forced to turn and fight once more, and this time in circumstances far less favourable. On the 22nd, therefore, he issued a proclamation which stated briefly and clearly that the powers vested in the High Commissioner under martial law were to be rigorously employed: that all officials who were not at their posts next day would be treated as having resigned; and all who endeavoured to restrain them from returning to duty would be liable to arrest and prosecution before a Military Court.

This curt assertion of firm intentions had an instantaneous effect. The officials of government began almost at once to return to their work in large numbers. The same method was then adopted in regard to the schools, and the High Commissioner announced his intention of closing them if the students did not return. It met with equal success, and once the administrative machinery was at work again, and the students were not entirely free to indulge in their favourite pastime of stirring up trouble, the other strikes showed swift signs of collapse.

The facts as they were had now at last to be faced. It was useless any longer to pretend that the moderate elements had any backing in the country, or that endeavours to rally them, even if they were successful, would have the slightest value. It was now perfectly clear that the only genuine issue was between the British controlling authority on the one hand, and the forces of an intransigent and irreconcilable extremism on the other. For many years, the British had been endeavouring to maintain the fiction that the Government of Egypt, *de facto* as well as *de jure*, was Egyptian. So long as they were able and willing

to give Egyptian Ministers such effective support as would keep them in power, the pretence could be continued. But now at last they had failed to carry out this essential function. The Egyptian Cabinet had resigned, not because it was unable to accept the advice of British authority, or because British authority demanded such a step; but quite simply because the Opposition party had inflicted an overwhelming defeat upon British control and Egyptian Ministers in combination.

It is true that a month later General Allenby did succeed in inducing Mohamed Said Pasha to form a Cabinet, but the fact had little if any importance, except in so far as it served to obscure the real issue.

On the one side stood the British control, armed with sufficient power and backed by sufficient force to enable it to carry on the government of Egypt, should it so decide. On the other side stood the Party of Independence, which had profited by years of preoccupied inattention on the part of the British to establish a secure hold over the majority of the Egyptian people. One or other of these two combatants must win outright before the situation could settle down again and allow Egypt to return to the development of her true interests. These were the true facts of the situation in which the British Government had now perforce to intervene; and in regard to which it was essential that it should now frame some definite policy.

## CHAPTER XXI

### SUDAN, 1908-1919

WE may now turn, for the breathing space which is so badly needed, to the story of the Sudan at the point where we left it in 1908. The task before its Government was essentially one of pacification, and must remain so for many years. It is true that international difficulties were no longer pressing, but in at least two directions the settlement of frontiers had brought no cessation of petty strife. The territory which marched with Abyssinia lay under the constant threat of predatory incursions from that more or less ungoverned country. And on the west there was still an immense expanse of Africa which owned no settled rule, in which the slave trade was still kept very much alive, and through which the traffic in arms could still keep the Arab tribes supplied with the means of warfare.

The Abyssinian border remained for many years a source of danger and trouble. Slave raiding and the smuggling of arms never ceased along its length: and since neither the Abyssinian government nor its officials along the border were capable of exercising any effective control over the territory within their frontier, the difficulties of the Sudan Government had been continuously and seriously increased. Not

only was it impossible to deal effectively with marauders from outside—who had always the Abyssinian sanctuary into which to escape—but a constant supply of smuggled arms encouraged the pugnacious tribes on the Sudan side of the border to continue their feuds with ferocity.

On the western frontier matters underwent a perceptible improvement as a result of the French advance from the west. As the boundaries of the Pax Gallica extended eastwards, the French forces at length came into conflict with the Sultan of Wadai, and in 1909 they inflicted a crushing defeat upon that ruler and entered into effective occupation of his territories. This operation dealt a severe blow to the African slave trade, and was certain to act as a salutary check to the trade in arms between the tribes of the interior and the North African ports. These advantages were temporarily somewhat diminished by difficulties in regard to frontier limitation. The French forces prepared next to occupy Tamr and Masalit on the frontier of Darfur, holding that these territories were dependencies of Wadai. Ali Dinar, Sultan of Darfur, claimed, however, that he had had assurances from the Sudan Government that Tamr and Masalit were and would remain under his suzerainty. The difficulty was not inconsiderable. Ali Dinar was a strong and fanatical ruler, possessing considerable wealth and a large armoury of smuggled rifles. His inclination to acquire rifles and his capacity to pay for them were a constant incentive to the illicit trade in arms through French territory. The French would therefore quite naturally have welcomed an opportunity to take measures against him: and Ali Dinar, chafing at their threats against Tamr and Masalit was only too likely to provide it. Fortunately

he maintained full confidence in the assurances and power of the Sudan Government, so that the intervention of the latter was able to restrain him until the question of frontiers could be brought to arbitration. A settlement was comfortably in view when the war broke out in 1914. Subsequently the situation was completely altered by the behaviour of Ali Dinar himself, who yielded to the solicitations of Turkey, conveyed to him by way of the Senussi, and threw off his allegiance to the Government at Khartoum. In 1916 punitive measures were taken against him. An expedition set out from Kordofan in March of that year, and, in spite of serious difficulties of country and climate, occupied the capital of Darfur, and by November had brought to an end a most successful operation with the death of Ali Dinar himself and the surrender of his remaining adherents. Darfur was incorporated in the Sudan, and the Anglo-French boundaries were finally settled by a convention concluded in 1919.

The unsettled condition of these frontier territories constituted a serious addition to the difficulties which confronted the Sudan Government in dealing with its internal tasks. The work of pacification was gravely retarded, but never for a moment was it allowed to pause. Of internal problems there were two which were clearly the most immediate and important. The first was the slave trade and the second the dangers inherent in Mahdiism—the local form of religious fanaticism.

In regard to the former problem, it must be recalled that as a result of previous methods of government, and particularly of the Dervish government, slavery had come to be the sole basis of the economic structure of the Sudan: and its abolition would be

regarded as the ruin of society, and would seriously add to the possibility of Mahdiist risings. While, therefore, there could be no question of adopting anything but the most drastic repression towards trading in slaves, the existing institution of slavery required more careful and gradual treatment. The British Government, acting upon these considerations, had adopted a very wise policy from the outset. It declared all slavery to be illegal, but it took no measures of any kind towards the immediate emancipation of slaves. On the other hand, it organised immediate and energetic measures against future enslavement. Thus the slave owner suffered no immediate harm: and, provided he behaved himself and treated his slaves well, no imminent economic catastrophe threatened him. But since any slave could now take measures under the law to have his freedom registered if he so desired, and since the difficulty of replacing slaves was likely to be enormously increased in the future, there was a constant incentive to the owner to treat his slaves well and carefully. In 1902 the activities of the Egyptian Slavery Repression department were extended under British control to the Sudan, and headquarters established at Khartoum; and by means of mounted patrols on the frontiers, patrol boats on the Red Sea, and a system of posts on trade routes, this department proceeded to suppress the whole traffic in slaves with all the vigour at its command, and with a very considerable measure of success.

The second problem—which may be shortly termed the problem of Mahdism—showed itself very seriously in 1908; indeed hardly at any time did it allow itself to be forgotten. But the incident of 1908 is worth recording more fully, because it is highly illustrative both in its inception and suppression. It



occurred in the fertile strip of land lying between the Blue and White Niles and known as the Gezira. In the Messellamia district there lived a landowner called Abdul Kader Wad Habuba, who had been a devoted adherent of the Mahdi and of the Khalifa. Profiting by the general amnesty after the battle of Omdurman, Abdul Kader had returned to his lands at Messellamia, but he appears to have been on bad terms with his family and his tribe and to have lived in a quarrelsome atmosphere which fanned his Mahdist tendencies. At any rate in 1908 he had collected a fairly large band of followers round him and proceeded to flout the Mamur of the district. At this stage, therefore, the British Deputy Inspector, Mr. Scott Moncrieff, intervened, entered into communication with Abdul Kader, and invited him to explain himself. Abdul Kader finally replied that if Mr. Scott Moncrieff and the Mamur would come and interview him, unattended and unarmed, he would lay his grievance before them: an offer which was unsuspectingly accepted. What followed is best told in the words of the official report: "On reaching Tugr, Mr. Scott Moncrieff and the Mamur, having left their escort of two policemen over a mile away, dismounted from their camels and entered the enclosure surrounding one of the houses. They were met by Abdul Kader and some of his followers. Mr. Moncrieff asked Abdul Kader if he had any grievance against the Government. He replied: 'I have no grievance against the Government: that which I am doing I do for Allah, and I will die for him!' So saying he struck down one of the officials. This gave the signal for the crowd to rush in and hack them both to death." Prompt measures were at once taken to deal with the situation, and although the punitive force received heavy

casualties in a surprise attack made upon it by Abdul Kader and his followers, the dispositions of the Government were very soon effective and within a few weeks Abdul Kader himself was captured by villagers, brought in for punishment, and duly executed.

This incident illustrated at once the suddenness with which religious fanaticism might at any moment break out into violence, and the essential need of rapid mobility in the forces of government, if movements of this nature were to be prevented from spreading with rapidity. While slave raiding and smuggling were prevalent on unsettled borders, while fanaticism was latent so close to the surface in the Mahomedan population, and while the tribes of the southern section were so passionately addicted to inter-tribal warfare, it was clear that the administration must be predominantly military in character. But the unrest of this particular year—1908—gave urgency to other considerations also, which were voiced by Sir Eldon Gorst in his annual report. "The events", he wrote, "of the past year have shown that the Sudan is still liable to sporadic outbreaks, which may become serious if they are not stamped out without delay, and that the raiding and fighting instincts of the savage tribes who live in the more remote parts of the country are a constant danger to peace". He therefore insisted that the military force with which the Sudan was then held was undoubtedly small for dealing with such a situation, but pointed out that the mere increase of the garrison, even putting on one side the question of cost, would be no effectual remedy. The most dangerous districts were in very unhealthy parts of the country, where neither British nor Egyptian troops could be permanently stationed, and there were practical

difficulties in the way of making any considerable increase in the Sudanese battalions. "In my opinion", he concluded, "the only sound and effective way of dealing with the situation is to improve the internal communications of the country, so as to give the present garrison greater mobility." In the same despatch he pointed out that internal communications must be largely improved if economic progress was to be made. Economic progress would hasten pacification, and ameliorate the financial situation, but such progress was not substantially possible, unless large irrigation works were undertaken. Such undertaking was again not possible without railway communications. "The two main problems which confront the Sudan to-day are the maintenance of public tranquillity and the attainment of a sound financial position." There were arguments of great force for believing that both problems depended for solution upon the development of the railway system. Indeed if pacification was, as seemed certain, the essential preliminary to development, there was no other course open to the Government. The financial position definitely precluded any increase in the garrison, even had such an increase been practicable. The Government revenue was expanding steadily, but it would be some years still, at the existing rate of expansion, before revenue would cover expenditure. Under the Anglo-Egyptian agreement of 1899 the Egyptian Government had yearly been making good the deficit in the Sudan Budget. This subvention from Egypt had been gradually decreasing since the year 1900, in which year it stood at £457,000. From 1904 to 1908 it remained at £380,000 annually: in 1909 it sank to £335,000, and in 1910 to £325,000. There was, therefore, in this accumulating burden of

debt an additional incentive to limit recurring expenditure and to push on economic development as rapidly as possible. The most urgent project of all was the extension of the railway southwards from Khartoum, and during 1909 this construction work was pushed on with great energy, so that by the end of that year trains were running 110 miles south of the capital to Wad Medani, and not long afterwards to the present terminus at El Obeid. Other projects were under constant discussion, but the abiding difficulty was the provision of the necessary capital.

It should not be inferred, however, from what has been written above that the work of pacification was in any way given pause by these serious difficulties. While the Central Government was struggling with these formidable problems of strategy and finance, individual governors in the provinces were cheerfully pursuing the even tenor of their way. There was very little danger of their becoming absorbed in paper problems—their work was still a matter almost entirely of human psychology, and as such intensely congenial. The student has only to turn to the administration reports to discover all the material he needs for this conclusion. Reference has already been made to the drama of Messellamia and the tragic death of Mr. Scott Moncrieff and the Mamur. In Kordofan also pacification had to be based upon force of arms, for the Nubas in their rocky hills had too long remained a storm centre to the surrounding country. Descendants of a negroid race who had formerly dominated a large part of the Sudan, the Nubas had been forced by the Arab invasion to take refuge in the hilly area of Kordofan. Here they maintained themselves in a fairly powerful independence under Egyptian and even under Mahdist rule.

Towards the Anglo-Egyptian Government they continued to hold an attitude of lawless defiance. They frequently raided the surrounding country and refused to restore captured prisoners or to pay the fines imposed by Government authority. Finally, in the autumn of 1908, it was decided to take military action against the most defiant and recalcitrant hill groups, and these were speedily reduced with small loss, in spite of the extremely difficult nature of the country.

In Mongalla, too, civilisation and the authority of government were undoubtedly advancing. Convincing proof of this was adduced by the Governor in the following instance: "The Berri tribe", he wrote, "appear friendly; and I was visited twice by Kid Di, son of the old Sheikh Alikor. On the first occasion Sheikh Alikor was brought in by Kid Di, who requested me to kill his father, saying it was the custom of the tribe to do so when the son became a certain age, and also that his father was hated by the tribe because he kept back the rain. I asked the old man if he agreed to this and wished to die, but he had little to say, and merely shrugged his shoulders. I explained to the son that it was not possible to accede to his request, and he then suggested that I should send his father to Khartoum. This was altogether too much for the old man, who hurled every sort of invective against his son for suggesting such a thing. He seemed quite callous as regards being put to death, but to be sent to Khartoum was another matter! I tell this anecdote," concludes the Governor—with a sudden return to officialdom—"to show that the Berris, knowing the government and their ways, were afraid to carry out their ancient custom in this case, and referred it to government to deal with." The picture presented in the above relation is indeed

charming. The courteous *savoir faire* which the Governor displayed throughout the conversation is quite admirable, but it must be admitted that the question whether or not death is preferable to residence in Khartoum is one which is still widely debated even in European circles.

The report of the Governor of Upper Nile Province is officially described as "a record of patient and persistent efforts to overcome rooted suspicion, ignorance, and superstition". It contained a story which amply illustrated the stage of civilisation with which he had to deal. "An old Dinka was sent by the Zeraf Inspector to the Sobat Inspector with a complaint concerning the slaying of his son through the agency of a crocodile, a common belief. (It was discovered later that the story was trumped up to obtain cattle.) Accompanied by another son, he arrived at Abwong, and the pair sat down in the Inspector's office and listened with interest to the case which preceded their own. They noted with approval that the Inspector carefully heard the plaintiff's story, and when that was completed, they expected instant judgment to be pronounced against the defendant. Great, therefore, was their disgust on finding that the defendant was also permitted to unfold his tale in all its harrowing details, and that eventually judgment was given in his favour. Shocked and horrified they rose to their feet and slunk out. 'My father,' the son was heard to say, 'this is no place for us, this man hears both sides!' And they fled."

There was one direction in which the lack of financial resources was not so seriously hampering the administration. For the purpose of exorcising the fanatical spirit which was such a serious menace to peace and order, it seemed clear that education would

prove the best weapon; and it would at the same time assist towards local recruitment for the government services, and—more important still—by the diffusion of technical and agricultural knowledge, would have an important effect upon economic progress. With these objects in view the government educational scheme was so drawn as to give the first place in importance to Elementary Vernacular Schools, and the second to the technical and vocational instruction supplied from the Upper School of the Gordon College. In addition there were instituted Primary Schools to serve as feeders to the Upper School of the Gordon College and to provide recruits for junior posts in government service. This comprehensive scheme was instituted in 1900 and has effected a steady educational progress. In a country where the population had been so reduced by misrule to backwardness and poverty, startling or swift results could hardly be expected, and were not by any means desirable. Extreme slowness and caution were essential if education was to remain of benefit. If its progress outstripped that of economic welfare, the result upon the prosperity and content of the country would undoubtedly be disastrous: but no mistake was made in this respect, and those in authority paid careful regard to the many dreadful examples in other parts of the world.

The vernacular elementary schools were therefore so arranged as to be a means of spreading civilisation among an agricultural population. Any idea that the education given in them was in any way a qualification for government service was deliberately and actively discouraged. Those who passed through them came out not disqualified by their education for working on the land or engaging in private enter-

prise; they were, on the contrary, better equipped for such careers. If parents desired their children to enter government service, they had to realise that the educational avenue into such service was neither cheap nor easy, and that special aptitude and special funds were essential. Thus, while civilisation and enlightenment—rather than literary culture or further examination—were the object of the elementary schools, for boys who showed special aptitude, either vocational or otherwise, there waited the Higher Primary Schools which prepared a limited number of boys for government service or for the technical instruction which was to be had at the Gordon College. It is claimed, and with justification, that the system has triumphantly vindicated itself as well suited to the needs and conditions of the population of the Sudan and as supplying the kind of education most likely to promote both moral and material progress.

In one particular direction the Gordon College received very valuable assistance—a direction in which its difficulties and its responsibilities were especially heavy. The eminent scientist and philanthropist, Mr. Henry S. Wellcome, presented the College with magnificent fully equipped research laboratories, the purpose of which was to conduct research into human, animal, and plant diseases, to carry out chemical and bacteriological tests, and to make analyses or assays of soil, minerals, ores, etc. The extreme importance of such assistance to the government of a backward and little-known country is of course obvious; in particular, the difficulties which were experienced by Europeans in supporting life in many regions of the Sudan were a grave embarrassment to the administration. Kala-azar, black-



water fever, and sleeping sickness are among the most deadly of tropical diseases, and were to be met with in many of the districts which Europeans now sought to administer.

Problems of education and public health had naturally, however, to give way in order of importance to the need of financial stability. The population of the Sudan was naturally prolific, and, with the more settled conditions brought by British occupation, a steady increase was setting in, but the effect of this increase upon the labour supply could not be felt for a decade at least: and meanwhile the decay of domestic slavery was bringing labour difficulties in its train. Cautious as had been the new policy in this regard, it was inevitable that the transition from the old to the new economic basis of society should bring temporary difficulties. The mass of the population were content, as in most tropical countries, with a low subsistence level and were not of very settled habits. Their tendency, therefore, when first freed from the compulsion of slavery was to throng to those places, such as Khartoum, where work upon government enterprises was plentiful and easily obtainable. The result was that agriculture suffered from a marked scarcity of labour. The difficulty was, however, only temporary: natural causes—the increase of population and the steady effect of peaceful conditions—were bound before long to produce a solution.

The era of steady uneventful and peaceful development was in fact now clearly setting in, and the year 1910 may be said to mark a definite stage in progress. In the early part of that year the bridge over the Blue Nile, linking Khartoum North with Khartoum itself, was completed, and by the end of the year the White

Nile had been bridged at Rabak and the railway line was being rapidly pushed southwards towards El Obeid. Investigation into the possibilities of irrigation was being pushed forward, and private enterprise was beginning to show marked interest in the prospects of development. Meanwhile from the Provinces came a steady record of progress and improvement. In the Bahr-el-Ghazal the Governor noted: "A very marked advance in the material condition of the people, more especially in the northern districts. Their attitude to us shows greater trust and confidence. The general prosperity is shown by the considerable increase in the number of merchants, who find a profitable business in the province." From Kordofan it was reported that the population and the revenue were steadily increasing, and the same symptoms were marked in the Sennar Province and in Mongalla. Everywhere there was a feeling of growing stability, with its inevitable sequel of material prosperity. In the winter of 1909 Sir Eldon Gorst made a tour in the Sudan and reported that "Everywhere the people were contented and prosperous and everywhere the most friendly relations appeared to exist between them and the authorities. The problems awaiting solution in the Sudan are comparatively simple," he wrote, "and the country is fortunately free from many of the peculiar complications which are met in Egypt at every step."

The contrast which is here drawn was now indeed beginning to be very marked. A clear and determined policy in the Sudan had given to the authorities on the spot the free hand which enabled them to concentrate upon the sole task of promoting the welfare of the people. In Egypt the attention of the authorities was already being gravely distracted from

the same task by the political turmoil which was inevitably engendered out of a lack of firm prevision. In the Sudan at least the first step—which is so supremely important—had been well and truly planted.

The arrival of Lord Kitchener as Consul-General at Cairo was followed within a few months by the visit of Their Majesties the King and Queen to the Sudan. Their Majesties on their return journey from India disembarked at Port Sudan, and also visited Sinkat. While recording the excellent effect produced in the Sudan by this visit, Kitchener set down also the impression produced upon himself by the changes in the country which had been brought about since he left it shortly after the reconquest.

“When we conquered the Sudan”, he wrote,<sup>1</sup> “there was hardly a single inhabitant who possessed any money, and, with the exception of the fighting men, the whole population was practically starving. Nothing, I think, strikes one more in revisiting the Sudan to-day than the great increase which has taken place in the individual prosperity of its inhabitants. This increased prosperity, which is the result of careful administration, has been so equally divided throughout the entire population that it is not too much to say there is now hardly a poor man in the Sudan. Unlike the Egyptian fellaheen, the Sudan cultivators are not bound down by debts, and have not, therefore, to struggle to meet the exorbitant interest of the usurers who prey upon this class in Egypt. In the Sudan the benefits of peace have been fully reaped by the cultivators and the increased facilities of communication have brought markets hitherto undreamt of to their doors. The develop-

<sup>1</sup> *Annual Report*, April 6, 1912.

ment of the rich products of the country has been carefully fostered, and a golden harvest has thus been brought which has remained in the country. It is, therefore, not surprising that the people are contented, happy, and loyal. When expressions of this happiness and contentment are heard, it is satisfactory to feel that they are not merely word painting for the benefit of the rulers of the country, but are based, as the people themselves maintain, on solid

The picture is indeed a happy one. But it has to be borne in mind that, much as individual and general prosperity had improved, the condition of the state finances was not yet adequate to the needs of development. Although the revenue for 1911 had reached the record figure of £1,375,600 (an increase of roughly 100 per cent. in five years) it was still insufficient to cover the minimum of necessary expenditure: and Egypt was, as we have seen, still supplying funds to make up the deficit. But, in the meanwhile, the work of preparation for large development schemes had been steadily going forward, and these schemes were now drawing to a stage at which the possibility of the provision of funds must receive practical consideration. The railway was advanced sufficiently for their undertaking, and the necessary levelling and surveys were completed or near completion. In 1911 important experiments had been carried out in the Gezira Plain with a view to testing the possibilities of cotton growing in that region, and these had proved entirely successful. The yield per feddan was reported to have been excellent and the quality of the cotton also.

“We may therefore conclude”, wrote Kitchener, “that it has been satisfactorily demonstrated that,

during the months when the excess of Nile water is not required for cultivation in Egypt, it can be utilised in the Sudan for the production of good and valuable crops."

It was essential, of course, to proceed in this direction with the greatest caution, in the interests both of Egypt and the Sudan. But with the success of this experiment, and with irrigation projects beginning to take detailed shape, the urgency of devising a sound financial scheme was becoming readily apparent. Two such irrigation projects were now before the central authorities for consideration. By the first it was intended to make a barrage across the White Nile somewhere near its junction with the Blue Nile, which would create a storage of water to be used in Egypt, partly as compensation for whatever volume of water might be required to irrigate the Gezira, partly as an additional supply. The other project contemplated a dam at Sennar across the Blue Nile, the storage of which would irrigate the Gezira. The total cost of the two projects was roughly estimated at about three million pounds. The main consideration underlying these connected projects was that the Sudan could best supply its needs from the Blue Nile, and that this could be done at a time of the year when the needs of Egypt would not be interfered with. It must not be thought, however, that these schemes say the last word in regard to the possibilities of regulating and employing the waters of the Blue and the White Nile. It is not by any means beyond the bounds of possibility to regulate these great rivers right at their sources. Works which could control the waters of the White Nile at its outlet from the great lakes would not be attended with any serious engineering difficulty. The same is true of the

Blue Nile at its source in Lake Tsana, if only agreement could be reached with the Abyssinian Government, in whose territory the lake lies: and by these means the supply of water for irrigation purposes would be augmented to the maximum degree and an immense development would be assured both for the Sudan and Egypt. In 1912, however, a wise caution relegated these vast schemes to a far-dreamed-of future. The system of basin irrigation inaugurated in 1909 for the Dongola Province had not been uniformly successful, and the supreme need of careful prevision had been well demonstrated not only in Dongola but in Kassala, where constant mishaps were minimising the benefits hoped for from the works constructed to regulate the waters of the Gash. It was decided, therefore, to concentrate primarily upon the Gezira project, which seemed to offer the best hopes of successful development, while at the same time schemes for improving the Dongola basin system were steadily put in hand.

Unfortunately, as we have already seen, the political conditions now prevalent in Egypt did not favour the provision of large capital sums from that source: and finally, in 1913, a new agreement was arrived at between Egypt and the Sudan, under which the annual subvention from the Egyptian Treasury ceased altogether. In 1912 this subvention amounted to £E163,000: in 1913 this sum disappeared altogether from the revenue side of the Sudan, and the only compensation for this loss was an increase of £E85,000 in the Customs receipts. In previous years, Customs receipts, even upon goods destined for the Sudan, had been collected in Egypt and credited to Egyptian revenues: in future, a sum estimated to be the equivalent of the duties collected in Egypt upon Sudan

imports was to be paid annually to the Sudan. In these circumstances, the Sudan Government had to appeal to the mother country for financial aid, and in 1913 His Majesty's Government consented to guarantee the interest upon a loan of three million pounds to be raised on stock issued by the Sudan Government. Of this sum, one million was to be spent upon irrigation of the Gezira, 1,600,000 upon railway extension, and the remainder upon the irrigation of smaller cotton areas—Tokar and Kassala. Freed from the difficulties of providing capital, the Sudan Government pushed on the Gezira scheme and by the end of 1913 a complete project was ready for the irrigation of a portion of the Gezira. In 1914 the scheme was inaugurated, and the construction of the dam at Makwar and of the main canal was put in hand—only to be brought to a sudden stop by the outbreak of war.

1914 was indeed a disastrous year for the Sudan. The cessation of the annual payment from Egypt had seriously embarrassed the balancing of the Budget. The Nile flood of 1913 had been the worst on record, and the rains had failed in many districts and been scanty everywhere. The resulting agricultural depression added seriously to the burden caused by two bad years in succession, and on the top of all this came the outbreak of war, with the consequent dislocation of trade, scarcity of shipping, and political unrest.

In spite of all these difficulties, the Sudan Government could not but be immensely encouraged by the proof afforded them in this crisis of the success of their general policy. They had consistently followed a policy of religious toleration, coupled with a recognition of the fact that the faith of Islam was a force of great influence in the life of the Sudan, and that the position of its leaders must therefore be recognised

## ANNEX (A).

*Protocole avec la France du 10 Novembre, 1874.*

Le 10 Novembre, 1874, son Excellence Chérif Pacha, Ministre de la Justice de Son Altesse le Khédive, et M. le Marquis de Cazaux, Agent et Consul-Général de France, agissant par ordre et d'après les instructions de leurs Gouvernements respectifs, ayant eu une dernière conférence pour arriver à une entente définitive sur les conditions auxquelles le Gouvernement Français adhérerait à la Réforme Judiciaire en Égypte, sont convenus de ce qui suit :—

1. Les accusations de banqueroute frauduleuse, dont il s'agit à l'Article 8, alinéa 9, titre ii, du Règlement Organique, continueront, comme par le passé, à être de la compétence de la juridiction de l'inculpé.

2. Pour le choix de l'un des Juges de Première Instance, le Gouvernement Égyptien s'adressera au Ministre de la Justice en France, dans la forme prévue pour la nomination des Conseillers de la Cour d'Appel, et le Magistrat ainsi désigné sera placé de préférence auprès du Tribunal du Caire.

3. Un des membres du Ministère Public sera choisi dans la Magistrature Française, et il est expressément entendu que, si une seconde Chambre était créée dans l'un des Tribunaux du Caire ou de Zagazig, et si, par conséquent, le personnel du parquet venait à être augmenté, un autre membre du Ministère Public serait également choisi parmi les Magistrats Français.

4. En ce qui touche la révision des Codes Égyptiens, l'Agent et Consul-Général de France adressera à son Excellence Chérif Pacha, dans le délai de quinze jours, à partir du moment où le Cabinet Français aura notifié son approbation au Gouvernement Égyptien, une note qui signalera les points de détail à éclairer dans la rédaction et l'économie de la nouvelle législation, et qui proposera les modifications utiles pour en faire disparaître les contradictions.

5. La réserve relative au statut personnel omise dans l'Article 9 du Règlement Organique, sera rétablie dans le texte de ce Règlement.

6. En ce qui touche la composition des Chambres, le Gouvernement Français ayant demandé que l'un des Magistrats



chargé de juger une affaire Européenne fût, autant que possible, de la nationalité de la partie en cause, le Gouvernement Égyptien s'est engagé à appeler sur ce point l'attention de la nouvelle magistrature, chargée de régler seule l'organisation de son service. La même réponse a été faite au Gouvernement Austro-Hongrois, qui avait exprimé le même désir.

7. Les immunités, les privilèges, les prérogatives, et les exceptions dont les Consulats étrangers et les fonctionnaires qui dépendent d'eux jouissent actuellement en vertu des usages diplomatiques et des Traités en vigueur, restent maintenus dans leur intégrité; en conséquence, les Agents et Consuls-Généraux, les Consuls, les Vice-Consuls, leurs familles, et toutes les personnes attachées à leur service, ne seront pas justiciables des nouveaux Tribunaux, et la nouvelle législation ne sera applicable ni à leurs personnes, ni à leurs maisons d'habitation. La même réserve est expressément stipulée en faveur des établissements Catholiques, soit religieux, soit d'enseignement, placés sous le protectorat de la France.

8. Il est entendu que les nouvelles lois et la nouvelle organisation judiciaire n'auront pas d'effet rétroactif, conformément au principe inscrit dans le Code Civil Égyptien.

9. Les réclamations déjà pendantes contre le Gouvernement Égyptien seront soumises à une Commission composée de trois Magistrats de la Cour d'Appel, choisis d'accord par les deux Gouvernements.

Cette Commission décidera souverainement et sans appel; elle établira elle-même les formes de la procédure à suivre.

10. Ces mêmes réclamations pourront toutefois, si les intéressés le préfèrent, être portées devant une Chambre Spéciale en première instance, et une autre Chambre Spéciale en Appel, composées de magistrats appartenant, les uns aux Tribunaux, les autres à la Cour d'Appel, et constituées conformément aux dispositions déjà convenues entre le Gouvernement Égyptien, celui d'Autriche-Hongrie, et quelques autres Puissances. Ces deux Chambres, bien que jugeant d'après les règles de la procédure des nouveaux Tribunaux, statueront au fond conformément aux lois et coutumes en vigueur au moment des faits qui auront motivé les réclamations.

11. Les affaires qui concernent à la fois des réclamants

appartenant à plusieurs nationalités seront jugées d'après celui de ces deux modes qui sera convenu entre leurs Consuls-Généraux respectifs.

12. Le règlement de ces affaires commencera avec l'installation des nouveaux Tribunaux et continuera pendant leur fonctionnement.

Les stipulations consignées dans le présent procès-verbal seront présentées dans le plus bref délai à la ratification des deux Gouvernements.

(Signé)

CAZAUX.  
CHERIF.

(TRANSLATION.)

*Protocol with France of November 10, 1874.*

ON the 10th of November, 1874, his Excellency Cherif Pasha, Minister of Justice of His Highness the Khedive, and the Marquis de Cazaux, Agent and Consul-General of France, acting by order of, and under instructions from their respective Governments, having held a final Conference with the view of coming to a definitive understanding as to the conditions on which France will give her adhesion to the judicial reforms in Egypt, have agreed as follows:—

1. Charges of fraudulent bankruptcy, which are dealt with in Article 8, paragraph 9, chapter 2, of the Organic Regulations, shall continue to be within the competency of the jurisdiction to which the accused was heretofore subject.

2. For the choice of one of the Judges of the First Instance, the Egyptian Government shall apply to the Minister of Justice in France in the form provided for the nomination of Judges of the Court of Appeal, and the Magistrate thus appointed shall be attached, by preference, to the Tribunal of Cairo.

3. One of the Members of the Ministry of Justice shall be chosen from the French Magistracy, and it is expressly understood that, if a second Chamber be created in one of the Tribunals of Cairo or of Zagazig, and in consequence the number of Officers of the Court be increased, another member of the Ministry of Justice shall be also chosen from French Magistrates.

4. In regard to the revision of the Egyptian Codes, the Agent and Consul-General of France shall within fifteen days from the time when the French Cabinet shall have notified its approbation to the Egyptian Government, address a note to his Excellency Cherif Pasha, pointing out in detail what requires to be cleared up in the text and arrangement of the new laws, and proposing modifications calculated to remove contradictions.

5. The reservation relative to personal status, omitted in Article 9 of the Organic Regulations, shall be reinserted in the text of those Regulations.

6. In regard to the composition of the Courts, the French Government having requested that one of the Magistrates whose duty it is to decide a suit with a European, shall be, as far as possible, of the nationality of the party concerned in the suit, the Egyptian Government engages that the attention of the new Magistracy, which is alone entrusted with the regulation of its own sittings, shall be called to this point. The same answer has been given to the Austro-Hungarian Government, which had expressed the same wish.

7. The immunities, privileges, prerogatives, and exemptions which foreign Consulates, as well as the officers thereto attached, at present enjoy, in virtue of diplomatic usages and of existing Treaties, are to be maintained in all their integrity; consequently, Agents and Consuls-General, Consuls and Vice-Consuls, their families, and all persons attached to their service, shall not be within the jurisdiction of the new Tribunals, and the new legislation shall not be applicable either to their persons or to the houses which they inhabit. The same reservation is expressly stipulated in favour of Catholic establishments, whether religious or educational, placed under the protectorate of France.

8. It is understood that in conformity with the principle laid down in the Egyptian Civil Code, the new laws and the new judicial organization shall not have a retroactive effect.

9. Pending claims against the Egyptian Government shall be submitted to a Commission composed of three Magistrates of the Court of Appeal chosen by agreement between the two Governments. This Commission shall decide absolutely and

without appeal, and shall fix for itself the forms of procedure it will follow.

10. These same claims may, however, if the parties interested prefer, be brought in the first instance before a Special Court, and on appeal before another Special Court, composed of Magistrates belonging, in the former case, to the Tribunals, in the latter, to the Court of Appeal, and constituted in conformity with the arrangements already agreed upon between the Egyptian Government, and the Government of Austria-Hungary, and of some other Powers. These two Courts, although giving their decisions in accordance with the rules of procedure of the new Tribunals, shall decide the real issue in conformity with the laws and customs in force at the time of the facts which gave rise to the claims.

11. Cases in which claimants belonging to several nationalities are jointly concerned, shall be decided according to that one of these two modes which shall be agreed upon by their respective Consuls-General.

12. The settlement of the cases shall commence together with the installation of the new Tribunals, and shall continue during their operation.

The stipulations embodied in the present agreement shall be submitted, with as little delay as possible, for the ratification of the two Governments.

(Signed)

CAZAUX.  
CHERIF.

#### ANNEX (B).

##### *Protocole avec l'Allemagne du 5 Mai, 1875.*

M. de Thiélaud, Secrétaire de Légation, chargé du Consulat-Général d'Allemagne et son Excellence Chérif Pacha, Ministre de la Justice de Son Altesse le Khédive, agissant par ordre et d'après les instructions de leurs Gouvernements respectifs, désirant constater leur entente définitive sur les modifications que le projet de la Réforme Judiciaire en Égypte a subies par

le Protocole Franco-Egyptien du 10 Novembre, 1874, sont convenus de ce qui suit:—

1. Les accusations de banqueroute frauduleuse, dont il s'agit à l'Article 8, alinéa 9, titre second, du Règlement Organique, continueront, comme par le passé, à être de la compétence de la juridiction de l'inculpé.

2. Le Gouvernement Égyptien s'étant adressé dans la forme prévue pour la nomination des Conseillers de la Cour d'Appel au Chancelier de l'Empire Allemand pour le choix d'un Juge de Première Instance, ce Magistrat déjà désigné sera placé de préférence au Tribunal du Caire.

3. Un des membres du Ministère Public sera choisi dans la Magistrature Allemande, et il est expressément entendu que, si une Seconde Chambre était créée dans l'un des Tribunaux du Caire ou de Zagazig et si, par conséquent, le personnel du parquet venait à être augmenté, un autre membre du Ministère Public serait également choisi parmi les Magistrats Allemands.

4. Les Codes Égyptiens révisés dernièrement seront présentés le plus tôt possible au Gouvernement Allemand.

5. La réserve relative au statut personnel, omise dans l'Article 9 du Règlement Organique, sera rétablie dans le texte de ce Règlement.

6. En ce qui touche la composition des Chambres, quelques Puissances ayant demandé que l'un des Magistrats chargés de juger une affaire Européenne fût, autant que possible, de la nationalité de la partie en cause, le Gouvernement Égyptien s'engage à appeler sur ce point l'attention de la nouvelle magistrature chargée de régler seule l'organisation du service.

7. Les immunités, les privilèges, les prérogatives, et les exemptions dont les Consulats étrangers et les fonctionnaires qui dépendent d'eux jouissent actuellement en vertu des usages diplomatiques et des Traités en vigueur, restent maintenus dans leur intégrité; en conséquence, les Consuls-Généraux, les Consuls, les Vice-Consuls, leurs familles et toutes les personnes attachées à leur service ne seront pas justiciables des nouveaux Tribunaux, et la nouvelle législation ne sera applicable ni à leurs personnes ni à leurs maisons d'habitation.

En outre, les établissements Allemands suivants:—

- A. L'Église Protestante Allemande à Alexandrie,
- B. L'Église Protestante Allemande au Caire,
- C. L'École Allemande à Alexandrie,
- D. L'École Allemande au Caire, et
- E. L'Hôpital Protestant Allemand à Alexandrie,

ne seront pas soumis à la compétence des nouveaux Tribunaux et resteront justiciables, comme dans le passé, des Tribunaux Consulaires Allemands. Il est bien entendu que les dits établissements ne seront exemptés qu'en qualité de corporations et que, par conséquent, les pasteurs, les professeurs, et toutes les personnes attachées à ces établissements relèveront de la juridiction établie en Égypte pour la nationalité à laquelle elles appartiennent.

En ce qui concerne la réserve stipulée à la fin de l'Article 7 du Protocole Franco-Égyptien du 10 Novembre, 1874, en faveur des établissements Catholiques, soit religieux, soit d'enseignement, placés sous le protectorat de la France, M. de Thiélaud déclare:—

Le Gouvernement Allemand ne reconnaissant à aucune Puissance un protectorat exclusif sur les établissements Catholiques en Orient, se réserve tous ses droits sur les sujets ou administrés Allemands appartenant à un de ces établissements, et il considère notamment comme entendu que la dite stipulation du Protocole Franco-Égyptien ne saurait porter atteinte à la juridiction qui est ou qui sera établie pour les sujets et administrés Allemands en Égypte, en vertu des lois de l'Empire et des arrangements faits entre l'Allemagne et le Gouvernement du Khédivé.

Son Excellence Chérif Pacha, au nom du Gouvernement Égyptien, prend acte de cette déclaration.

8. Il est entendu que les nouvelles lois et la nouvelle organisation judiciaire n'auront pas d'effet rétroactif, conformément au principe inscrit dans le Code Civil Égyptien.

9. Les réclamations déjà pendantes contre le Gouvernement Égyptien seront soumises à une Commission composée de trois membres de la Cour d'Appel, choisis d'accord par les deux Gouvernements. Cette Commission décidera souverainement et sans appel; elle établira elle-même les formes de la procédure à suivre.

10. Ces mêmes réclamations pourront toutefois, si les intéressés le préfèrent, être portées devant une Chambre Spéciale en première instance, et une autre Chambre Spéciale en Appel, composées de Magistrats appartenant, les uns aux Tribunaux, les autres à la Cour d'Appel, et constituées conformément aux dispositions déjà convenues entre le Gouvernement Égyptien et celui d'Autriche-Hongrie. Ces deux Chambres, bien que jugeant d'après les règles de la procédure des nouveaux Tribunaux, statueront au fond conformément aux lois et coutumes en vigueur au moment des faits qui auront motivé les réclamations.

11. Les affaires qui concernent à la fois des réclamants appartenant à plusieurs nationalités seront jugées d'après celui de ces deux modes qui sera convenu entre leurs Consuls-Généraux respectifs.

12. Le règlement de ces affaires commencera avec l'installation des nouveaux Tribunaux et continuera pendant leur fonctionnement.

Fait au Caire en deux originaux, le 5 Mai, 1875.

(Signé) DE THIÉLAU.  
CHERIF.

(TRANSLATION.)

*Protocol with Germany of May 5, 1875.*

M. de Thiélaeu, Secretary of Legation, in charge of the Consulate-General of Germany, and his Excellency Cherif Pasha, Minister of Justice of His Highness the Khedive, acting by order of, and under instructions from, their respective Governments, being desirous of recording the definitive understanding come to respecting the modifications which the project of Judicial Reforms in Egypt has undergone in consequence of the Franco-Egyptian Protocol of the 10th of November, 1874, have agreed as follows:—

1. Charges of fraudulent bankruptcy, which are dealt with in Article 8, paragraph 9, chapter 2, of the Organic Regulations, shall continue to be within the competency of the jurisdiction to which the accused was heretofore subject.

2. The Egyptian Government having applied, in the form provided for the nomination of Judges of the Court of Appeal, to the Chancellor of the German Empire to choose one of the Judges of the First Instance, the Magistrate already delegated shall be attached, by preference, to the Tribunal of Cairo.

3. One of the members of the Ministry of Justice shall be chosen from the German Magistracy, and it is expressly understood that, if a second Chamber be created in one of the Tribunals of Cairo or of Zagazig, and in consequence, the number of Officers of the Court be increased, another member of the Ministry of Justice shall be also chosen from German Magistrates.

4. The recently revised Egyptian codes shall be presented as soon as possible to the German Government.

5. The reservation relative to personal status, omitted in Article 9 of the Organic Regulations, shall be re-inserted in the text of those regulations.

6. In regard to the composition of the Courts, some Powers having requested that one of the Magistrates, whose duty it is to decide a suit with a European, shall be, as far as possible, of the nationality of the party concerned in the suit, the Egyptian Government engages that the attention of the new Magistracy, which is alone entrusted with the regulation of its own sittings, shall be called to this point.

7. The immunities, privileges, prerogatives, and exemptions which foreign Consulates as well as the officers thereto attached at present enjoy, in virtue of diplomatic usages and of existing Treaties, shall be maintained in all their integrity; consequently Agents and Consuls-General, Consuls and Vice-Consuls, their families, and all persons attached to their service, shall not be within the jurisdiction of the new Tribunals, and the new legislation shall not be applicable either to their persons or to the houses which they inhabit.

Moreover the following German establishments:—

- A. The German Protestant Church at Alexandria,
- B. The German Protestant Church at Cairo,
- C. The German School at Alexandria,
- D. The German School at Cairo, and
- E. The German Protestant Hospital at Alexandria,



shall not be subject to the competency of the new tribunals and shall continue to be as heretofore under the jurisdiction of the German Consular Courts. It is clearly understood that the said establishments shall only be exempt in their quality of corporations, and that, consequently, the ministers, professors, and all persons attached to these establishments shall be subject to the jurisdiction established in Egypt for the nationality to which they belong.

With regard to the reserve stipulated at the end of Article 7 of the Franco-Egyptian Protocol of November 10, 1874, in favour of Catholic establishments, whether devoted to religion or to teaching, placed under the Protectorate of France, M. de Thiélaud declares:—

As the German Government does not recognize the exclusive protectorate of any Power over Catholic establishments in the East, it reserves all its rights over the German subjects or officials belonging to any of these establishments, and considers it specially understood that the said stipulation in the Franco-Egyptian Protocol shall not interfere with the jurisdiction which is or shall be established for German subjects and officials in Egypt, in virtue of the laws of the Empire, and of arrangements made between Germany and the Government of the Khedive.

His Excellency Cherif Pasha, in the name of his Government, accepts this declaration.

8. It is understood that, in conformity with the principle laid down in the Egyptian Civil Code, the new laws and the new judicial organization shall not have a retroactive effect.

9. Pending claims against the Egyptian Government shall be submitted to a Commission composed of three Magistrates of the Court of Appeal, chosen by agreement between the two Governments. This Commission shall decide absolutely and without appeal, and shall fix for itself the forms of procedure it will follow.

10. These same claims may, however, if the parties interested prefer, be brought in the first instance before a Special Court, and on appeal before another Special Court, composed of Magistrates belonging, in the former case, to the Tribunals, in the latter to the Court of Appeal, and constituted in conformity

with the arrangements already agreed upon between the Egyptian Government and the Government of Austria-Hungary. These two Courts, although giving their decisions in accordance with the rules of procedure of the new Tribunals, shall decide the real issue in conformity with the laws and customs in force at the time of the facts which gave rise to the claims.

11. Cases in which claimants belonging to several nationalities are jointly concerned, shall be decided according to that one of these two modes which shall be agreed upon by their respective Consuls-General.

12. The settlement of the cases shall commence together with the installation of the new Tribunals, and shall continue during their operation.

Done at Cairo, in duplicate, the 5th of May, 1875.

(Signed)

**DE THIÉLAU.  
CHERIF.**

## APPENDIX B

### DECLARATION OF THE PROTECTORATE

TO HIS HIGHNESS PRINCE HUSSEIN KAMIL PASHA.

YOUR HIGHNESS,

I am instructed by His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to bring to the notice of Your Highness the circumstances preceding the outbreak of war between His Britannic Majesty and the Sultan of Turkey and the changes which the war entails in the status of Egypt.

In the Ottoman Cabinet there were two parties. On the one side was a moderate party, mindful of the sympathy extended by Great Britain to every effort towards reform in Turkey, who recognized that in the war in which His Majesty was already engaged no Turkish interests were concerned, and welcomed the assurance of His Majesty and His Allies that neither in Egypt nor elsewhere would the war be used as a pretext for any action injurious to Ottoman interests. On the other side a band of unscrupulous military adventurers looked to find in a war of aggression, waged in concert with His Majesty's enemies, the means of retrieving the disasters, military, financial and economic, into which they had already plunged their country. Hoping to the last that wiser counsels might prevail, His Majesty and His Allies, in spite of repeated violations of their rights, abstained from retaliatory action until compelled thereto by the crossing of the Egyptian frontier by armed bands and by unprovoked attacks on Russian open ports by the Turkish Naval forces under German officers.

His Majesty's Government are in possession of ample evi-

dence that ever since the outbreak of war with Germany His Highness Abbas Hilmi Pasha, late Khedive of Egypt, has definitely thrown in his lot with His Majesty's enemies.

From the facts above set out, it results that the rights over Egypt, whether of the Sultan, or of the late Khedive, are forfeit to His Majesty.

His Majesty's Government have already, through the General Officer Commanding His Majesty's Forces in Egypt, accepted exclusive responsibility for the defence of Egypt in the present war. It remains to lay down the form of the future Government of the country, freed, as I have stated, from all rights of suzerainty or other rights heretofore claimed by the Ottoman Government.

Of the rights thus accruing to His Majesty, no less than of those exercised in Egypt during the last thirty years of reform, His Majesty's Government regard themselves as trustees of the inhabitants of Egypt. And His Majesty's Government have decided that Great Britain can best fulfil the responsibilities she has incurred towards Egypt by the formal declaration of a British Protectorate, and by the Government of the country under such Protectorate by a Prince of the Khedivial Family.

In these circumstances I am instructed by His Majesty's Government to inform Your Highness that, by reason of your age and experience, you have been chosen as the Prince of the Family of Mehemet Aly most worthy to occupy the Khedivial position, with the title and style of Sultan of Egypt; and, in inviting Your Highness to accept the responsibilities of Your high office, I am to give you the formal assurance that Great Britain accepts the fullest responsibility for the defence of the territories under Your Highness against all aggression whence-soever coming; and His Majesty's Government authorise me to declare that after the establishment of the British Protectorate now announced all Egyptian subjects wherever they may be will be entitled to receive the protection of His Majesty's Government.

With the Ottoman suzerainty there will disappear the restrictions heretofore placed by the Ottoman firmans upon the numbers and organization of Your Highness' Army and upon the grant by Your Highness of honorific distinctions.

As regards foreign relations, His Majesty's Government deem it most consistent with the new responsibilities assumed by Great Britain that the relations between Your Highness' Government and the Representatives of Foreign Powers should henceforth be conducted through His Majesty's Representative in Cairo.

His Majesty's Government have repeatedly placed on record that the system of Treaties, known as the Capitulations, by which Your Highness' Government is bound, are no longer in harmony with the development of the country: but, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, the revision of those treaties may most conveniently be postponed until the end of the present war.

In the field of internal administration, I am to remind Your Highness that, in consonance with the tradition of the British policy, it has been the aim of His Majesty's Government, while working through and in the closest association with the constituted Egyptian Authorities, to secure individual liberty, to promote the spread of education, to further the development of the natural resources of the country, and, in such measure as the degree of enlightenment of public opinion may permit, to associate the governed in the task of Government. Not only is it the intention of His Majesty's Government to remain to such policy, but they are convinced that the clearer definition of Great Britain's position in the country will accelerate progress towards self-government.

The religious convictions of Egyptian subjects will be scrupulously respected as are those of His Majesty's own subjects, whatever their creed. Nor need I affirm to Your Highness that, in declaring Egypt free from any duty of obedience to those who have usurped political power at Constantinople, His Majesty's Government are animated by no hostility towards the Khaliphate. The past history of Egypt shows, indeed, that the loyalty of Egyptian Mohammedans towards the Khaliphate is independent of any political bonds between Egypt and Constantinople.

The strengthening and progress of Mohammedan institutions in Egypt is naturally a matter in which His Majesty's Government take a deep interest and with which Your High-

ness will be specially concerned, and in carrying out such reforms as may be considered necessary, Your Highness may count upon the sympathetic support of His Majesty's Government.

I am to add that His Majesty's Government rely with confidence upon the loyalty, the good sense and self-restraint of Egyptian subjects to facilitate the task of the General Officer Commanding His Majesty's Forces, who is entrusted with the maintenance of internal order, and with the prevention of the rendering of aid to the enemy.

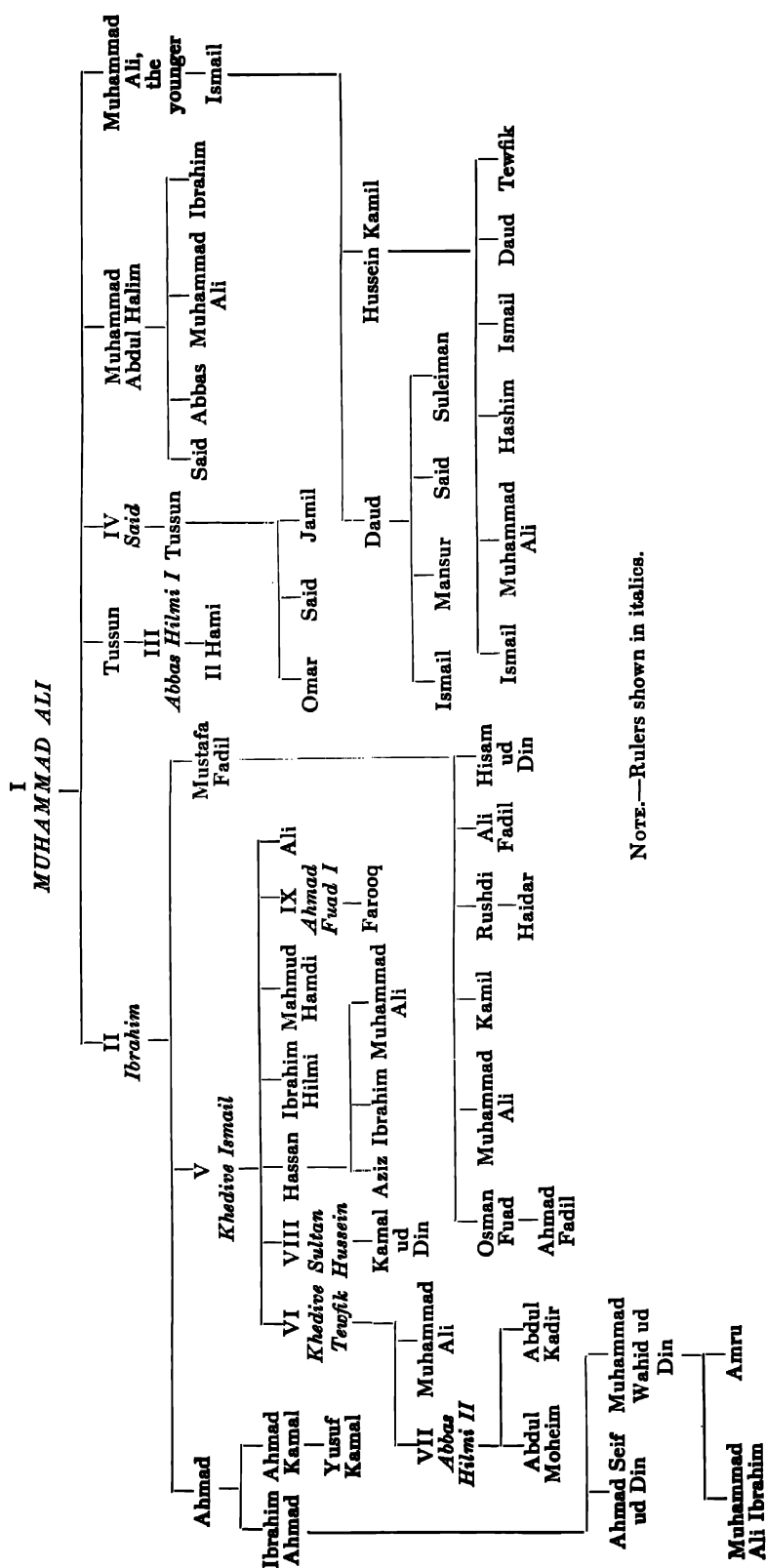
I avail myself of this opportunity to present to Your Highness the assurance of my highest respect.

(Signed) MILNE CHEETHAM.

CAIRO, 19th December 1914.

# APPENDIX C

## GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE FAMILY OF MUHAMMAD ALI



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